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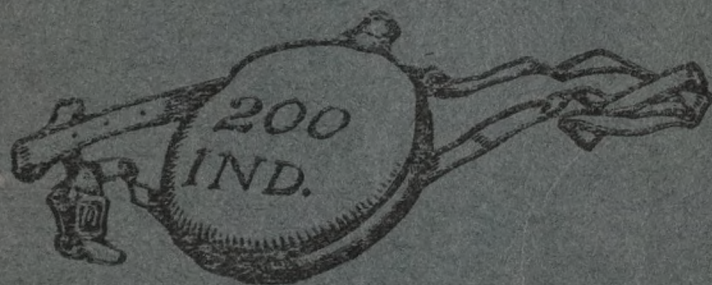
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SI KLEGG:

SI AND SHORTY, WITH THEIR BOY RECRUITS,
ENTER ON THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

BY JOHN MCELROY



BOOK No. 6

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, WASHINGTON, D. C.



VIEW OF CHATTANOOGA

CHATTANOOGA IN 1864.

✓ SI KLEGG

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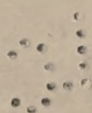
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no. 2.

PREFACE.

“Si Klegg, of the 200th Ind., and Shorty, his Partner,” were born years ago in the brain of John McElroy, Editor of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

These sketches are the original ones published in THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, revised and enlarged somewhat by the author. How true they are to nature every veteran can abundantly testify from his own service. Really, only the name of the regiment was invented. There is no doubt that there were several men of the name of Josiah Klegg in the Union Army, and who did valiant service for the Government. They had experiences akin to, if not identical with, those narrated here, and substantially every man who faithfully and bravely carried a musket in defense of the best Government on earth had sometimes, if not often, experiences of which those of Si Klegg are a strong reminder.

THE PUBLISHERS.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—Shorty Begins Being a Father to Pete Skidmore.....	11
CHAPTER II.—Si and Shorty Come Very Near Losing Their Boys.....	16
CHAPTER III.—The Partners Get Back to Their Regiment at Last With All Their Recruits.....	32
CHAPTER IV.—The Recruits Are Assigned to Companies.....	46
CHAPTER V.—The Young Recruits Are Given an Initiation Into Army Life.....	58
CHAPTER VI.—Si Klegg Puts His Awkward Squad Thru Its First Drill.....	67
CHAPTER VII.—Shorty's Heart Turns Toward Maria, and He Finally Gets a Letter From Her.....	79
CHAPTER VIII.—Shorty Writes a Letter to Maria Klegg and Enters Upon His Parental Relations to Little Pete Skidmore.....	92
CHAPTER IX.—Si Takes His Boys For a Little March Into the Country.....	102
CHAPTER X.—The Boys Have a Couple of Little Skirmishes, But Finally Get to the Mill.....	114
CHAPTER XI.—Shorty Gives the Boys Their First Lesson in Foraging.....	127
CHAPTER XII.—The Opening of the Atlanta Campaign.....	141
CHAPTER XIII.—The First Day of the Atlanta Campaign....	154
CHAPTER XIV.—The Evening After the Battle.....	167
CHAPTER XV.—The Fighting Around Buzzard's Roost, and the Capture of the Rebel Stronghold.....	176

CHAPTER XVI.—The 200th Ind. Assaults the Rebel Works at Daybreak.....	195
CHAPTER XVII.—Gathering Up the Boys After the Battle....	214
CHAPTER XVIII.—An Artillery Duel and a “Demonstration” on the Enemy’s Position.....	226
CHAPTER XIX.—Si and Shorty Are Put Under Arrest.....	241
CHAPTER XX.—Shorty is Arraigned Before the Court- Martial.....	254

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Chattanooga in 1864.....	Frontispiece
Little Pete Found.....	13
"He Ain't No Officer"	27
Old Friends Meet.....	41
"You Have Lost Little Pete"	51
"Them's Our Names and Addresses"	59
"Draw Your Stomachs In"	73
A Letter From Maria.....	81
Pete Gets Licked.....	99
Close Up, Boys.....	111
"Don't Anybody Shoot"	119
"Mr. Yank, Don't Conjure Me"	135
Little Pete's "Awful Rebels"	149
Little Pete's Horse Bolts.....	169
Monty Sees Things, Too.....	185
The Charge Thru the Abatis.....	211
"Hooray For The Old Battery"	231
Awful Destruction.....	242
Shorty Reports For Trial.....	257

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO THE RANK AND FILE
OF THE GRANDEST ARMY EVER MUSTERED FOR WAR.

THIS IS NUMBER SIX
OF THE
SI KLEGG SERIES.

SI KLEGG

CHAPTER I.

SHORTY BEGINS BEING A FATHER TO PETE SKIDMORE.

"Come, my boy," Si said kindly. "Don't cry. You're a soldier now, and soldiers don't cry. Stop it."

"Dod durn it," blubbered Pete, "I ain't cryin' bekase I'm skeered. I'm cryin' bekase I'm afeared you'll lose me. I know durned well you'll lose me yit, with all this foolin' around."

"No, we won't," Si assured him. "You just keep with us and you'll be all right."

"Here, you blim-blammed, moon-eyed suckers, git offen that 'ere crossin'," yelled at them a fireman whose engine came tearing down toward the middle of the squad. "Hain't you got no more sense than to stand on a crossin'?"

He hurled a chunk of coal at the squad, which hastily followed Si to the other side of the track.

"Hello, there; where are you goin', you chuckle-headed clodhoppers?" yelled the men on another train rushing down from a different direction. "This ain't no hayfield. Go back home and drive cows, and git out o' the way o' men who're at work."

There was more scurrying, and when at last Si reached a clear space, he had only a portion of his squad with him, while Shorty was vowing he would

not go a step farther until he had licked a railroad man. But the engines continued to whirl back and forth in apparently purposeless confusion, and the moment that he fixed upon any particular victim of his wrath, he was sure to be compelled to jump out of the way of a locomotive clanging up from an unexpected direction and interposing a train of freight cars between him and the man he was after.

Si was too deeply exercised about getting his squad together to pay attention to Shorty or the jeering, taunting railroaders. He became very fearful that some of them had been caught and badly hurt, probably killed, by the remorseless locomotives.

"This's wuss'n a battle," he remarked to the boys around him. "I'd ruther take you out on the skirmish-line than through them trains agin."

However, he had come to get some comprehension of the lay of the ground and the movements of the trains by this time, and by careful watching succeeded in gathering in his boys, one after another, until he had them all but little Pete Skidmore. The opinion grew among them that Pete had unwisely tried to keep up with the bigger boys, who had jumped across the track in front of a locomotive, and had been caught and crushed beneath the wheels. He had been seen up to a certain time, and then those who were last with him had been so busy getting out of the way that they had forgotten to look for him. Si calmed Shorty down enough to get him to forget the trainmen for awhile and take charge of the squad while he went to look for Pete. He had become so bewildered that he could

not tell the direction whence they had come, or where the tragedy was likely to have happened. The farther he went in attempting to penetrate the maze of moving trains, the more hopeless the quest seemed. Finally he went over to the engineer of a



LITTLE PETE FOUND.

locomotive that was standing still and inquired if he had heard of any accident to a boy soldier during the day.

“Seems to me that I did hear some o’ the boys talkin’ about No. 47 or 63 havin’ run over a boy, or

something," answered the engineer carelessly, without removing his pipe from his mouth. "I didn't pay no attention to it. Them things happen every day. Sometimes it's my engine, sometimes it's some other man's. But I hain't run over nobody for nigh a month now."

"Confound it," said Si savagely; "you talk about runnin' over men as if it was part o' your business."

"No," said the engineer languidly, as he reached up for his bell-rope. "'Tain't, so to speak, part o' our regler business. But the yard's awfully crowded, old Sherman's makin' it do five times the work it was calculated for, trains has got to be run on the dot, and men must keep off the track if they don't want to git hurt. Stand clear, there, yourself, for I'm goin' to start."

Si returned dejectedly to the place where he had left his squad. The expression of his face told the news before he had spoken a word. It was now getting dark, and he and Shorty decided that it was the best thing to go into bivouac where they were and wait till morning before attempting to penetrate the maze beyond in search of their regiment. They gathered up some wood, built fires, made coffee and ate the remainder of their rations. They were all horribly depressed by little Pete Skidmore's fate, and Si and Shorty, accustomed as they were to violent deaths, could not free themselves from responsibility however much they tried to reason it out as an unavoidable accident. They could not talk to one another, but each wrapped himself up in his blanket and sat moodily, a little distance from the fires, chewing the cud of bitter fancies. Neither

could bear the thought of reporting to their regiment that they had been unable to take care of the smallest boy in their squad. Si's mind went back to Peter Skidmore's home, and his mother, whose heart would break over the news.

The clanging and whistling of the trains kept up unabated, and Si thought they made the most hateful din that ever assailed his ears.

Presently one of the trains stopped opposite them and a voice called from the locomotive:

"Do you men know of a squad of Injianny recruits commanded by Serg't Klegg?"

"Yes, here they are," said Si, springing up. "I'm Serg't Klegg."

"That's him," piped out Pete Skidmore's voice from the engine, with a very noticeable blubber of joy. "He's the same durned old fool that I kept tellin' all the time he'd lose me if he wasn't careful, and he went and done it all the same."

"Well, here's your boy," continued the first voice. "Be mighty glad you've got him back and see that you take care o' him after this. My fireman run down on the cow-ketcher and snatched him up just in the nick o' time. A second more and he'd bin mince-meat. Men what can't take better care o' boys oughtn't to be allowed to have charge of 'em. But the Government gits all sorts o' damn fools for \$13 a month."

Si was so delighted at getting Pete back unhurt that he did not have the heart to reply to the engineer's gibes.

CHAPTER II.

SI AND SHORTY COME VERY NEAR LOSING THEIR BOYS.

ALL healthy boys have a strong tincture of the savage in them. The savage alternately worships his gods with blind, unreasoning idolatry, or treats them with measureless contumely.

Boys do the same with their heroes. It is either fervent admiration, or profound distrust, merging into actual contempt. After the successful little skirmish with the guerrillas the boys were wild in their enthusiasm over Si and Shorty. They could not be made to believe that Gens. Grant, Sherman or Thomas could conduct a battle better. But the moment that Si and Shorty seemed dazed by the multitude into which they were launched, a revulsion of feeling developed, which soon threatened to be ruinous to the partners' ascendancy.

During the uncomfortable, wakeful night the prestige of the partners still further diminished. In their absence the army had been turned topsy-turvy and reorganized in a most bewildering way. The old familiar guide-marks had disappeared. Two of the great corps had been abolished—consolidated into one, with a new number and a strange commander. Two corps of strange troops had come in from the Army of the Potomac, and had been con-

solidated into one, taking an old corps' number. Divisions, brigades and regiments had been totally changed in commanders, formation and position. Then the Army of the Tennessee had come in, to complicate the seeming muddle, and the more that Si and Shorty cross-questioned such stragglers as came by the clearer it seemed to the boys that they were hopelessly bewildered, and the more depressed the youngsters became.

The morning brought no relief. Si and Shorty talked together, standing apart from the squad, and casting anxious glances over the swirling mass of army activity, which the boys did not fail to note and read with dismal forebodings.

"I do believe they're lost," whimpered little Pete Skidmore. "What in goodness will ever become of us, if we're lost in this awful wilderness?"

The rest shuddered and grew pale at this horrible prospect.

"That looks like a brigade headquarters over there," said Si, pointing to the left. "And I believe that's our old brigade flag. I'm goin' over there to see."

"I don't believe that's any brigade headquarters at all," said Shorty. "Up there, to the right, looks ever so much more like a brigade headquarters. I'm goin' up there to see. You boys stay right there, and don't move off the ground till I come back. I won't be gone long."

As he left, the boys began to feel more lonely and hopeless than ever, and little Pete Skidmore had hard work to restrain his tears.

A large, heavy-jowled man, with a mass of black

whiskers, and wearing a showy but nondescript uniform, appeared.

"That must be one o' the big Generals," said Harry Joslyn. "Looks like the pictures o' Grant. Git into line, boys, and salute."

"No, it ain't Grant, neither," said Gid Mackall. "Too big. Must be Gen. Thomas."

The awed boys made an effort to form a line and receive him properly.

"Who are you, boys?" said the newcomer, after gravely returning the salute.

"We're recruits for the 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry," answered Harry Joslyn. "Kin you tell us where the rijimint is? We're lost."

"Used to know sich a regiment. In fact, I used to be Lieutenant-Colonel of it. But I hain't heard of it for a long time. Think it's petered out."

"Petered out!" gasped the boys.

"Yes. It was mauled and mummixed to death. There's plenty o' mismanagement all around the army, but the 200th Injianny had the worst luck of all. It got into awful bad hands. I quit it just as soon's I see how things was a-going. They begun to plant the men just as soon's they crossed the Ohio, and their graves are strung all the way from Louisville to Chickamauga. The others got tired o' being mauled around, and starved, and tyrannized over, and o' fighting for the nigger, and they skipped for home like sensible men."

The boys shuddered at the doleful picture.

"Who brung you here?" continued the newcomer.

"Sarjint Klegg and Corpril Elliott," answered Harry.

"Holy smoke," said the newcomer with a look of disgust. "They've made non-commish out o' them sapsuckers. Why, I wouldn't let them do nothin' but dig ditches when I was in command o' the regiment. But they probably had to take them. All the decent material was gone. How much bounty'd you get?"

"We got \$27.50 apiece," answered Harry. "But we didn't care nothin' for the bounty. We"——

"Only \$27.50 apiece. Holy smoke! They're payin' 10 times that in some places."

"I tell you, we didn't enlist for the bounty," reiterated Harry.

"All the same, you don't want to be robbed o' what's yours. You don't want to be skinned out o' your money by a gang o' snoozers who're gittin' rich off of green boys like you. Where's this Sarjint Klegg and Corpril Elliott that brung you here?"

"They've gone to look for the rijimint."

"Gone to look for the regiment. Much they've gone to look for the regiment. They've gone to look out for their scalawag selves. When you see 'em agin, you'll know 'em, that's all."

Little Pete Skidmore began to whimper.

"Say, boys," continued the newcomer, "you'd better drop all idee of that 200th Injianny and come with me. If there is any sich a regiment any more, and you get to it, you'd be sorry for it as long as you live. I know a man over here who's got a nice regiment, and wants a few more boys like you to fill it up. He'll treat you white and give you twice as much bounty as you'll git anywhere's else, and he's goin' to keep his regiment back in the fortifica-

tions, where there won't be no fightin', and hard marches, and starvation"——

"But we enlisted to fight and march, and"—— interjected Harry.

"Well, you want a good breakfast just now, more'n anything else, judgin' from appearances. Come along with me and I'll git you something to eat."

"But we waz enlisted for the 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry, and must go to that rijimint," protested Monty Scruggs.

"Well, what's that got to do with your havin' a good breakfast?" said the newcomer plausibly. "You need that right off. Then we kin talk about your regiment. As a matter of fact, you're only enlisted in the Army of the United States and have the right to go to any regiment you please. Tyrannical as the officers may be, they can't take that privilege of an American freeman away from you. Come along and git breakfast first."

The man's appearance was so impressive, his words and confident manner so convincing, and the boys so hungry that their scruples vanished, and all followed the late Lieut.-Col. Billings, as he gave the word, and started off through the mazes of the camp with an air of confident knowledge that completed his conquest of them.

Ex-Lieut.-Col. Billings strode blithely along, feeling the gladsome exuberance of a man who had "struck a good thing," and turning over in his mind as to where he had best market his batch of lively recruits, how he could get around the facts of their previous enlistment, and how much he ought to

realize per head. He felt that he could afford to give the boys a good breakfast, and that that would be fine policy. Accordingly, he led the way to one of the numerous large eating houses, established by enterprising sutlers, to their own great profit and the shrinkage of the pay of the volunteers. He lined the boys up in front of the long shelf which served for a table and ordered the keeper:

"Now, give each of these boys a good breakfast of ham and eggs and trimmings and I'll settle for it."

"Good mornin', Kunnel. When 'd you git down here?" said a voice at his elbow.

"Hello, Groundhog, is that you?" said Billings, turning around. "Just the man I wanted to see. Finish your breakfast and come out here. I want to talk to you."

"Well," answered Groundhog, wiping his mouth, "I'm through. The feller that runs this shebang ain't made nothin' offen me, I kin tell you. It's the first square meal I've had for a week, and I've et until there ain't a crack left inside o' me that a skeeter could git his bill in. I laid out to git the wuth o' my money, and I done it. What're you doin' down here in this hole? Ain't Injianny good enough for you?"

"Injianny's good enough on general principles, but just now there's too much Abolition malaria there for me. The Lincoln satraps 've got the swing on me, and I thought I'd take a change of air. I've come down here to see if there weren't some chances to make a good turn, and I've done very well so far. I've done a little in cattle and got some cotton through the lines—enough at least to pay my board

and railroad fare. But I think the biggest thing is in recruits, and I've got a scheme which I may let you into. You know there are a lot of agents down here from the New England States trying to git niggers to fill up their quotas, and they are paying big money for recruits. Can't you go out and gether up a lot o' niggers that we kin sell 'em?"

"Sure," said Groundhog confidently. "Kin git all you want, if you'll pay for 'em. But what's this gang you've got with you?"

"O, they're a batch for that blasted Abolition outfit, the 200th Injianny. Them two ornery galoots, Si and Shorty, whose necks I ought've broke when I was with the regiment, have brung 'em down. They're not goin' to git to the 200th Injianny if I kin help it, though. First place, it'll give old McBiddle, that Abolition varmint, enough to git him mustered as Colonel. He helped oust me, and I have it in for him. He was recommended for promotion for gittin' his arm shot off at Chickamauga. Wisht it'd bin his cussed head."

"But what're you goin' to do with the gang?" Groundhog inquired.

"O, there are two or three men around here that I kin sell 'em to for big money. I ought to make a clean thousand off 'em if I make a cent."

"How much'll I git out o' that?" inquired Groundhog anxiously.

"Well, you ain't entitled to nothin' by rights. I've hived this crowd all by myself, and kin work 'em all right. But if you'll come along and make any affidavits that we may need, I'll give you a sawbuck. But on the nigger lay I'll stand in even with you,

half and half. You run 'em in and I'll place 'em and we'll whack up."

"'Tain't enough," answered Groundhog angrily. "Look here, Jeff Billings, I know you of old. You've played off on me before, and I won't stand no more of it. Jest bekase you've bin a Lieutenant-Colonel and me only a teamster you've played the high and mighty with me. I'm jest as good as you are any day. I wouldn't give a howl in the infernal regions for your promises. You come down now with \$100 in greenbacks and I'll go along and help you all I kin. If you don't"——

"If I don't what'll you do, you lowlived whelp?" said Billings, in his usual brow-beating manner. "I only let you into this as a favor, because I've knowed you before. You hain't brains enough to make a picayune yourself, and hain't no gratitude when someone else makes it for you. Git out o' here; I'm ashamed to be seen speakin' to a mangy hound like you. Git out o' here before I kick you out. Don't you dare speak to one o' them boys, or ever to me agin. If you do I'll mash you. Git out."

Si and Shorty's dismay when they returned and found their squad entirely disappeared was overwhelming. They stood and gazed at one another for a minute in speechless alarm and wonderment.

"Great goodness," gasped Si at length, "they can't have gone far. They must be somewhere around."

"Don't know about that," said Shorty despairingly. "We've bin gone some little time and they're quick-footed little rascals."

"What fools we wuz to both go off and leave 'em,"

murmured Si in deep contrition. "What fools we wuz."

"No use o' cryin' over spilt milk," answered Shorty. "The thing to do now is to find 'em, which is very much like huntin' a needle in a haystack. You stay here, on the chance o' them comin' back, and I'll take a circle around there to the left and look for 'em. If I don't find 'em I'll come back and we'll go down to the Provo-Marshal's."

"Goodness, I'd rather be shot than go back to the rijimint without 'em," groaned Si. "How kin I ever face the Colonel and the rest o' the boys?"

Leaving Si gazing anxiously in every direction for some clew to his missing youngsters, Shorty rushed off in the direction of the sutler's shanties, where instinct told him he was most likely to find the runaways.

He ran up against Groundhog.

"Where are you goin' in sich a devil of a hurry?" the teamster asked. "Smell a distillery somewhere?"

"Hello, Groundhog, is that you? Ain't you dead yit? Say, have you seen a squad o' recruits around here—all boys, with new uniforms, and no letters or numbers on their caps?"

"Lots and gobs of 'em. Camp's full of 'em. More comin' in by every train."

"But these wuz all Injianny boys, most of 'em little. Not an old man among 'em."

"Shorty, I know where your boys are. What'll you give me to tell you?"

Shorty knew his man of old, and just the basis on which to open negotiations.

"Groundhog, I've just had my canteen filled with first-class whisky—none o' your commissary rotgut, but old rye, hand-made, fire-distilled. I got it to take out to the boys o' the rijimint to celebrate my comin' back. Le' me have just one drink out of it, and I'll give it to you if you'll tell."

Groundhog wavered an instant. "I wuz offered \$10 on the other side."

Shorty was desperate. "I'll give you the whisky and \$10."

"Le' me see your money and taste your licker."

"Here's the money," said Shorty, showing a bill. "I ain't goin' to trust you with the canteen, but I'll pour out this big spoon full, which'll be enough for you to taste." Shorty drew a spoon from his haver-sack and filled it level full.

"It's certainly boss licker," said Groundhog, after he had drunk it, and prudently hefted the canteen to see if it was full. "I'll take your offer. You're to have just one swig out o' it, and no more, and not a hog-swaller neither. I know you. You'd drink that hull canteenful at one gulp, if you had to. You'll let me put my thumb on your throat?"

"Yes, and I'll give you the canteen now and the money after we find the boys."

"All right. Go ahead. Drink quick, for you must go on the jump, or you'll lose your boys."

Shorty lifted the canteen to his lips and Groundhog clasped his throat with his thumb on Adam's apple. When Shorty got his breath he sputtered:

"Great Jehosephat, you didn't let me git more'n a spoonful. But where are the boys?"

"Old Jeff Billings's got 'em down at Zeke Wig-

gins's hash-foundry feedin' 'em, so's he kin toll 'em off into another rijimint."

"Old Billings agin," shouted Shorty in a rage. "Where's the place? Show it to me. But wait a minute till I run back and git my pardner."

"Gi' me that licker fust," shouted Groundhog, but Shorty was already running back for Si. When he returned with him he threw the canteen to Groundhog with the order, "Go ahead and show us the place."

By the time they came in sight of the sutler's shanty the boys had finished their breakfast and were moving off after Billings.

"There's your man and there's your boys," said Groundhog, pointing to them. "Now gi' me that 'ere sawbuck. You'll have to excuse me havin' anything to do with old Billings. He's licked me twice already."

Shorty shoved the bill into his hand, and rushed down in front of Billings.

"Here, you black-whiskered old roustabout, where 're you takin' them boys?" he demanded.

"Git out o' my way, you red-headed snipe," answered Billings, making a motion as if to brush him away.

"If you don't go off and leave them boys alone I'll belt you over the head with my gun," said Si, raising his musket.

"You drunken maverick," answered Billings, trying to brave it out. "I'll have you shot for insultin' and threatenin' your sooperior officer. Skip out o' here before the Provo comes up and ketches you. Let me go on about my business. Forward, boys."

"Officer nothin'. You can't play that on us," said Si. "Halt, there, boys, and stand fast."

A crowd of teamsters, sutlers' men and other camp followers gathered around. A tall, sandy-bearded man with keen, gray eyes and a rugged,



HE AIN'T NO OFFICER.

stony face rode up. He wore a shabby slouch hat, his coat was old and weather-stained, but he rode a spirited horse.

"Here, what's all this row about?" he asked in quick, sharp tones.

"Keep out o' this mix," said Shorty, without looking around. "'Tain't none o' your business. This is our party." With that he made a snatch at Billings's collar to jerk him out of the way.

"What, you rascal, would you assault an officer?" said the newcomer, spurring his horse through the crowd to get at Shorty.

"He ain't no officer, General," said Si, catching sight of two dim stars on the man's shoulders. "He's tryin' to steal our recruits from us."

"Yes, I am an officer," said Billings, avoiding Shorty's clutch. "These men are assaultin' me while I'm on duty. I want them arrested and punished."

"Fall back there, both of you," said the General severely, as Si and Shorty came to a present arms. "Sergeant, who are you, and where do you belong?"

"I'm Serg't Klegg, sir, of Co. Q, 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry."

"Who are you, Corporal?"

"I'm Corp'l Elliott, sir, of Co. Q, 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry."

"Now, officer, who are you?"

"I'm Lieut.-Col. Billings, sir."

"Where's your shoulder-straps?"

"I had 'em taken off this coat to git fixed. They were torn."

"Where's your sword?"

"I left it in my quarters."

"Fine officer, to go on duty that way. Where do you belong?"

Billings hesitated an instant, but he felt sure that

the General did not belong to the Army of the Cumberland, and he answered:

"I belong to the 200th Ind."

"That ain't true, General," Si protested. "He was fired out of the regiment a year ago. He's a citizen."

"Silence, Sergeant. Billings? Billings? The name of the Lieutenant-Colonel of the 200th Ind. happens to be McBiddle—one-armed man, good soldier. Billings? Billings? T. J. Billings? Is that your name?"

"Yes, sir," answered Billings, beginning to look very uncomfortable.

"Didn't you have some trouble about a bunch of cattle you sold to the Quartermaster-General?"

"Well, there was little difference of opinion, but"——

"That'll do, sir. That'll do for the present. I begin to get you placed. I thought I knew the name Billings as soon as you spoke it, but I couldn't remember any officer in my army of that name. Now, Sergeant, tell me your story."

"General, me and my pardner here," began Si, "have bin home on wounded furlough. Wounded at Chickamauga and promoted. We got orders to bring on this squad o' recruits from Jeffersonville for our rijimint. We got in last night and this mornin' me and my pardner started out to see if we could find someone to direct us to the rijimint, leavin' the squad alone for a few minutes. While we wuz gone this feller, who's bin fired out of our rijimint and another one that he was in, come along and tolled our boys off, intendin' to sneak 'em into another rijimint and git pay for 'em. By great good luck we ketched

him in time, just before you come up. You kin ask the boys themselves if I hain't told you the truth."

"Good idea," said the General, in his quick, peremptory way. "You three (indicating Si, Shorty and Billings) march off there 25 paces, while I talk to the boys."

Gen. Sherman, for it was the Commander of the Military Division of the Mississippi, who, with his usual impetuous, thorough way, would investigate even the most insignificant affair in his camps, when the humor seized him, now sprang from his horse, and began a sharp, nervous cross-questioning of the boys as to their names, residence, ages, how they came there and whither they were bound.

"You came down with this Sergeant and Corporal, did you? You were recruited for the 200th Ind., were you? You were put under the charge of those men to be taken to your regiment?" he asked Pete Skidmore, at the end of the line.

"Yes, sir," blubbered Pete. "And they are always losin' us, particularly me, durn 'em. Spite of all I kin say to 'em they'll lose me, durn their skins."

"No, my boy, you sha'n't be lost," said the General kindly, as he remounted. "Stick to your command and you'll come through all right. Billings, you thorough-paced rascal, I want you to get to the other side of the Ohio River as quickly as the trains will carry you. I haven't time to deal with you as you deserve, but if I have occasion to speak to you again you'll rue it as long as you live. There's a train getting ready to go out. If you are wise, you'll take it. Serg't Klegg and Corp'l Elliott, you deserve to lose your stripes for both of you leaving your squad

at the same time. See that you don't do it again. You'll find the 200th Ind. in camp on the east side of Mission Ridge, about a mile south of Rossville Gap. Go out this road until you pass old John Ross's house about a half a mile. You'll find several roads leading off to the right, but don't take any of them till you come to one that turns off by a sweet gum and a honey-locust standing together on the banks of a creek. Understand? A sweet gum and a honey-locust standing together on the banks of a creek. Turn off there, go across the mountain and you'll find your camp. Move promptly now."

"I declare," said a big Wagonmaster, as the General galloped off, "if that old Cump Sherman don't beat the world. He not only knows where every regiment in his whole army is located, but I believe he knows every man in it. He's a far-reacher, I tell you."

"Great Jehosephat," gasped Shorty, "was that Gen. Tecumseh Sherman?"

"As sure 's you're a foot high," replied the Wagonmaster.

"And I told him to mind his own business," stammered Shorty.

"Yes, and if it hadn't bin for him you'd 'a' lost us, durn it," ejaculated little Pete Skidmore.

CHAPTER III.

THE PARTNERS GET BACK TO THEIR REGIMENT AT
LAST, WITH ALL THEIR RECRUITS.

SI AND SHORTY were too glad to get their boys back, and too eager to find their regiment, to waste any time in scolding the derelicts.

"Now that you boys have had a good breakfast," Si remarked with an accent of cutting sarcasm, "at the expense of that kind-hearted gentleman, Mr. Billings, I'm goin' to give you a pleasant little exercise in the shape of a forced march. If you don't make the distance between here and the other side o' Rossville Gap quicker'n any squad has ever made it I'm much mistaken. Shorty, put yourself on the left and bring up the rear."

"You bet," answered Shorty, "and I'll take durned good care I don't lose little Pete Skidmore."

"Now," commanded Si, getting a good lay of the ground toward the gap, "Attention. All ready? Forward, march."

He led off with the long march stride of the veteran, and began threading his way through the maze of teams, batteries, herds, and marching men and stragglers with the ease and certainty born of long acquaintance with crowded camps. He dodged around a regiment here, avoided a train there, and slipped through a marching battery at the next place with a swift, unresting progress that quickly took away the boys' wind and made them pant with the exertion of keeping up.

In the rear was the relentless Shorty.

"Close up, there! Close up!" he kept shouting to those in front. "Don't allow no gaps between you. Keep marchin' distance—19 inches from back to breast. Come along, Pete. I ain't a-goin' to lose you, no matter what happens."

"Sarjint," gasped Harry Joslyn, after they had gone a couple of miles, "don't you call this purty fast marchin'?"

"Naah," said Si contemptuously. "We're just crawlin' along. Wait till we git where it's a little clear, and then we'll go. Here, cut acrost ahead o' that battery that's comin' up a-trot."

There was a rush for another mile or two, when there was a momentary halt to allow a regiment of cavalry to go by at a quick walk.

"Goodness," murmured Gid Mackall, as he set down the carpet-sack which he would persist in carrying, "are they always in a hurry? I s'posed that when soldiers wuzzent marchin' or fightin' they lay around camp and played cards and stole chickens, and wrote letters home, but everybody 'round here seems on the dead rush."

"Don't seem to be nobody pic-nickin' as far's I kin see," responded Si, "but we hain't no time to talk about it now. We must git to the rijimint. Forward!"

Another swift push of two or three miles brought them toward the foot of Mission Ridge, and near the little, unpainted frame house which had once been the home of John Ross, the chief of the Cherokees.

"Boys, there's the shebang or palace of the big

Injun who used to be king of all these mountains and valleys," said Si, stopping the squad to give them a much needed rest. "He run this whole country, and had Injuns to burn, though he generally preferred to burn them that didn't belong to his church."

"Roasted his neighbors instid o' his friends in a heathen sort of a way," continued Shorty.

"What was his name?" inquired Monty Scruggs.

"John Ross."

"Humph, not much of a name," said Monty in a disappointed tone, for he had been an assiduous reader of dime novels. "'Tain't anything like as fine as Tecumseh, and Osceola, and Powhatan, and Jibbeninosay, and Man-Afraid-of-Gettin'-His-Neck-Broke. Wasn't much of a big Injun."

"Deed he was," answered Si. "He and his fathers before him run this whole neck o' woods accordin' to the big Injun taste, and give the Army o' the United States all they wanted to do. Used to knock all the other Injuns around here about like ten-pins. The Rosses were bosses from the word go."

"Don't sound right, though," said Monty regretfully. "And such a shack as that don't look like the wigwam of a great chief. 'Tain't any different from the hired men's houses on the farms in Injianny."

"Well, all the same, it's got to go for the scene of a cord o' dime novels," said Shorty. "We've brung in civilization and modern improvements and killed more men around here in a hour o' working time than the ignorant, screechin' Injuns killed since the flood."

"Do them rijimints look like the 200th Injianny?"

anxiously inquired Harry Joslyn, pointing to some camps on the mountain-side, where the men were drilling and engaged in other soldierly duties.

"Them," snorted Shorty contemptuously. "Them's only recruits that ain't got licked into shape yet. When you see the 200th Injianny you'll see a rijimint, I tell you. Best one in the army. You ought to be mighty proud you got a chanst to git into sich a rijimint."

"We are; we are," the boys assured him. "But we're awful anxious to see jest what it's like."

"Well, you'll see in a little while the boss lot o' boys. Every one of 'em fightin' cocks, thoroughbred—not a dunghill feather or strain in the lot. Weeded 'em all out long ago. All straight-cut gentlemen. They'll welcome you like brothers and skin you out of every cent o' your bounty, if you play cards with 'em. They're a dandy crowd when it comes to fingerin' the pasteboards. They'll be regler fathers to you, but you don't want to play no cards with 'em."

"I thought you said they wuz all gentlemen and would be regler brothers to us," said Harry Joslyn.

"So they will—so they will. But your brother's the feller that you've got to watch clostest when he's settin' in front o' you with one little pair. He's the feller that's most likely to know all you know about the cards and what he knows besides. They've bin skinnin' one another so long that they'll be as anxious to git at your fresh young blood as a New Orleans skeeter is to sink into a man just from the North."

"Didn't think they'd allow gambling in so good a

regiment as the 200th Ind.," remarked Alf Russell, who was a devoted attendant on Sunday school.

"Don't allow it. It's strictly prohibited."

"But I thought that in the army you carried out orders, if you had to kill men."

"Well, there's orders and orders," said Shorty, philosophically. "Most of 'em you obey to the last curl on the letter R, and do it with a jump. Some of 'em you obey only when you have to, and take your chances at improving the State o' Tennessee by buildin' roads and diggin' up stumps in the parade ground if you're ketched not mindin'. Of them kind is the orders agin gamblin'."

"Shorty, stop talkin' to the boys about gamblin'. I won't have it," commanded Si. "Boys, you mustn't play cards on no account, especially with older men. It's strictly agin orders, besides which I'll break any o' your necks that I ketch at it. You must take care o' your money and send it home. Forward, march."

They went up the road from the John Ross house until they came to that turning off to the right by a sweet gum and a sycamore, as indicated by Gen. Sherman, and then began a labored climbing of the rough, stony way across Mission Ridge. Si's and Shorty's eagerness to get to the regiment increased so with their nearness to it that they went at a terrific pace in spite of all obstacles.

"Please, Sarjint," begged Gid Mackall, as they halted for an instant near a large rock, "need we go quite so fast? We're awfully anxious to git to the regiment, too, but I feel like as if I'd stove two inches offen my legs already against them blamed rocks."

"I can't keep up. I can't keep up at all," whimpered little Pete Skidmore. "You are just dead certain to lose me."

"Pull out just a little more, boys," Si said pleasantly. "We must be almost there. It can't be but a little ways now."

"Close up there in front!" commanded Shorty. "Keep marchin' distance—19 inches from back to breast. Come on, Pete. Gi' me your hand; I'll help you along."

"I ain't no kid, to be led along by the hand," answered Pete sturdily, refusing the offer. "I'll keep up somehow. But you can't expect my short legs to cover as much ground as them telegraph poles o' your'n."

The summit of the ridge was crossed and a number of camps appeared along the slope.

"Wonder which one o' them is the 200th Injianny's?" said Si to Shorty.

"I thought the 200th Injianny was so much finer rijimint than any other that you'd know it at sight," said Harry Joslyn, with a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"I would know it if I was sure I was lookin' at it," answered Shorty. "But they seem to have picked out all the best rijimints in the army to go into camp here this side o' Mission Ridge. Mebbe they want to make the best show to the enemy."

"That looks like the camp o' the 200th Injianny over there," said Si, pointing to the right, after scanning the mountain-side. "See all them red shirts hangin' out to dry? That's Co. A; they run

to red flannel shirts like a nigger barber to striped pants."

"No," answered Shorty; "that's that Ohio rijimint, made up o' rollin' mill men and molders. They all wear red flannel shirts. There's the 200th Injianny just down there to the left, with all them men on extra duty on the parade ground. I know just the gang. Same old crowd; I kin almost tell their faces. They've bin runnin' guard, as usual, and comin' back full o' apple-jack and bad language and desire to give the camp a heavy coat o' red paint. Old McBiddle has tried to convince 'em that he was still runnin' the rijimint, and his idees wuz better'n theirs, and there they are. There's Jim Monaghan handlin' that pick as if he was in the last stages o' consumption. There's Barney Maguire, pickin' up three twigs 'bout as big as lead pencils, and solemnly carryin' 'em off the parade ground as if they wuz fence-rails. I'll just bet a month's pay that's Denny Murphy marchin' up and down there with his knapsack filled with Tennessee dornicks. Denny's done that feather-weight knapsack trick so often that his shoulders have corns and windgalls on 'em, and they always keen a knapsack packed for him at the guard-house ready for one of his Donnybrook fair songs and dances. Mighty good boy, Denny, but he kin git up a red-hotter riot on his share of a canteen of apple-jack than any three men in the rijimint. That feller tied to a tree is Tony Wilson. He's refused to dig trenches agin. O, I tell you, they're a daisy lot."

"Shorty," admonished Si. "You mustn't talk that

way before the boys. What'll they think o' the rijimint?"

"Think of it?" said Shorty, recovering himself. "They've got to think of it as the very best rijimint that ever stood in line-of-battle. I'll punch the head of any man that says anything to the contrary. Every man in it is a high-toned, Christian gentleman. Mind that, now, every one of you brats, and don't you allow nobody to say otherwise."

"No," said Si, after further study of the camps, "neither o' them 's the 200th Injianny. They've both got brass bands. Must be new rijimints."

"Say," said Shorty, "there's a royal lookin' rooster standin' up in front of that little house there. Looks as if the house was headquarters for some high-roller, and him doin' Orderly duty. If he knows as much as he's got style, he knows more'n old Sherman himself. Go up and ask him."

It was the first time in all their service that either of them had seen a soldier in the full dress prescribed by the United States Army regulations, and this man had clearly won the coveted detail of Orderly by competition with his comrades as being the neatest, best-dressed man in the squad. He was a tall, fine-looking young man, wearing white gloves and a paper collar, with a spotless dress coat buttoned to the chin, his shoes shining like mirrors, his buttons and belt-plates like new gold, and his regulation hat caught up on the left side with a feather and a gilt eagle. The front of his hat was a mass of gilt letters and figures and a bugle, indicating his company, regiment and State. On his breast was a large, red star.

"Jehosephat," sighed Shorty. "I wish I had as many dollars as he has style. Must be one of old Abe's body guards, sent out here with Grant's commission as Lieutenant-General. Expect that red star passes him on the railroads and at the hotels. I'd like to play him two games out o' three, cut-throat, for it. I could use it in my business."

"No," said the Orderly to Si, with a strong Yankee twang, "I don't know a mite about the 200th Ind. Leastwise, I don't remember it. Everybody down here's from Indiana, Ohio or Illinois. It's one eternal mix, like Uncle Jed Stover's fish—couldn't tell shad, herring nor sprat from one another. It seems to me more like a 'tarnal big town-meeting than an army. All talk alike, and have got just as much to say; all act alike. Can't tell where an Indiana regiment leaves off and Ohio one begins; can't tell officer from private, everybody dresses as he pleases, and half of them don't wear anything to tell where they belong. There wasn't a corps badge in the whole army when we come here."

"Corps badges—what's them?" asked Si.

"Corps badges? Why this is one," said the man, tapping his red star. "This shows I belong to the Twelfth Corps—best corps in the Army of the Potomac, and the First Division—best division in the corps. We have to wear them so's to show our General which are his men, and where they be. Haven't you no corps badges?"

"Our General don't have to tag us," said Shorty, who had come up and listened. "He knows all of us that's worth knowin', and that we'll go wherever he orders us, and stay there till he pulls us off. Our

corps badge's a full haversack and Springfield rifle sighted up to 1,200 yards."

"Well, you do fight in a most amazing way," said the Orderly, cordially. "We never believed it of



OLD FRIENDS MEET.

such rag-tag and bobtail until we saw you go up over Mission Ridge. You were all straggling then, but you were straggling toward the enemy. Never saw such a mob, but it made the rebels sick."

"Well, if you'd seen us bustin' your old friend

Longstreet at Snodgrass Hill, you'd seen some he-fightin'. We learned him that he wasn't monkeyin' with the Army o' the Potomac, but with fellers that wuz down there for business, and not to wear paper collars and shine their buttons. He come at us seven times before we could git that little fact through his head, and we piled up his dead like cordwood."

"Well, you didn't do any better than we did with Early's men at Culp's Hill, if we do wear paper collars," returned the other proudly. "After we got through with Johnston's Division you couldn't see the ground in front for the dead and wounded. And none of your men got up on Lookout Mountain any quicker'n we did. Paper collars and red stars showed you the way right along."

"My pardner's only envious because he hain't no paper collars nor fine clothes," said Si, conciliatorily. "I've often told him that if he'd leave chuck-a-luck alone and save his money he'd be able to dress better'n Gen. Grant."

"Gen. Grant's no great shakes as a dresser," returned the other. "I was never so surprised in my life as one day when I was Orderly at Division Headquarters, and a short man with a red beard, and his clothes spattered with mud, rode up, followed by one Orderly, and said, 'Orderly, tell the General that Gen. Grant would like to see him.' By looking hard I managed to make out three stars on his shoulder. Why, if Gen. McClellan had been coming you'd have seen him for a mile before he got there."

"If Gen. Grant put on as much style in proportion

to what he done as McClellan, you could see him as far as the moon," ventured Shorty.

"Well, we're not gettin' to the rijimint," said the impatient Si. "Le's rack on. So long, Orderly. Come and see us in the 200th Injianny and we'll treat you white. Forward, march!"

"There's a couple of boys comin' up the road. Probably they kin tell us where the rijimint is," suggested Shorty.

The two boys were evidently recruits of some months' standing, but not yet considered seasoned soldiers.

"No," they said, "there is no 200th Ind. here now. It was here yesterday, and was camped right over there, where you see that old camp, but before noon came an order to march with three days' rations and 40 rounds. It went out the Lafayette Road, and the boys seemed to think they wuz goin' out to Pigeon Mountain to begin the general advance o' the army, and wuz mightily tickled over it."

"Gone away," said Si, scanning the abandoned camp sadly; "everybody couldn't have gone. They must've left somebody behind that wasn't able to travel, and somebody to take care o' 'em. They must've left some rijimintal stuff behind and a guard over it."

"No," the boys assured him. "They broke up camp completely. All that wasn't able to march was sent to the hospital in Chattynoogy. Every mite of stuff was loaded into wagons and hauled off with 'em. They never expected to come back."

"That camp ground don't look as it'd bin occupied for two weeks," said Shorty. "See the ruts made

by the rain in the parade ground and the general look o' things. I don't believe the rijimint only left there yisterday. It don't look as if the 200th Injianny ever had sich a camp. It's more like one o' the camps o' them slack-twisted Kaintucky and Tennessee rijimints."

"If Oi didn't belave that Si Klegg and Sharty was did intoirely, and up home in Injianny, Oi'd be sure that was their v'ices," said a voice from the thicket by the side of the road. The next instant a red-headed man, with a very distinct map of Ireland in his face, leaped out, shouting:

"Si and Sharty, ye thieves of the worruld, whin did ye get back, and how are yez? Howly saints, but Oi'm glad to see yez."

"Jim Monaghan, you old Erin-go-bragh," said Shorty, putting his arm around the man's neck, "may I never see the back o' my neck, but I'm glad to see you. I was just talkin' about you. I thought I recognized you over there in one of the camps, at your favorite occupation of extry dooty, cleanin' up the parade ground."

"No; Oi've not bin on extry jooty for narely two wakes now, but it's about due. But here comes Barney Maguire and Con Taylor, Tony Wilson and the rest iv the gang. Lord love yez, but they'll be surely glad to see yez."

The others came up with a tumultuous welcome to both.

"Where's the camp?" asked Si.

"Jist beyant—jist beyant them cedars there—not a musket-shot away," answered Jim, pointing to the place.

"What'd you mean, you infernal liars, by tellin' us that the rijimint was gone?" said Shorty, wrathfully to the men whom he had met, and who were still standing near, looking puzzled at the demonstrations.

"Aisy, now, aisy," said Jim. "We're to blame for that, so we are. Ye say, we wint over by Rossville last night and had a bit av a shindy and cleaned out a sutler's shop. We brought away some av the most illegant whisky that iver wet a man's lips, and hid it down there in the gulch, where we had jist come back for it. We sane you comin' and thought yez was the provo-guard after us. Ye say ye stopped there and talked to that peacock at the Provo-Marshal's quarters, and we thought yez was gittin' instructions. We sint these rookies out, who we thought nobody'd know, to give you a little fairy story about the rijimint being gone, to throw you off the scint, until we could finish the liquor."

"Yes, I know," laughed Shorty, "after you'd got the budge down you didn't care what happened. You're the same old brick-topped Connaught Ranger."

"You and Si come down into the gulch and jine us."

"Can't think of it for a minute," said Shorty with great self-denial. "Don't speak so loud before these boys. They're recruits for the rijimint. We must take 'em into camp. We'll see you later."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RECRUITS ARE ASSIGNED TO COMPANIES.

THE strangest feeling possessed Si and Shorty when once in the camp of their old regiment, and after the first hearty welcome of their comrades was over.

There was a strangeness about everything that they could not comprehend.

It was their regiment—the 200th Ind.; it was made up of the same companies, with the great majority of the men the same, but it was very far from being the 200th Ind. which crossed the Ohio River in September, 1862.

Marvelous changes had been wrought by 18 months' tuition in the iron school of war, in the 10 separate herds of undisciplined farmer boys which originally constituted the regiment. Yellow, downy beards appeared on faces which had been of boyish smoothness when the river was crossed, but this was only one of the minor changes. There was an alertness, a sureness, a self-confidence shining from eyes which was even more marked. Every one carried himself as if he knew precisely what he was there for, and intended doing it. There was enough merriment around camp, but it was very different from the noisy rollicking of the earlier days. The men

who had something to do were doing it with systematic earnestness; the men who had nothing to do were getting as much solid comfort and fun as the situation afforded. The frothy element among officers and men had been rigorously weeded out or repressed. All that remained were soldiers in the truest sense of the word. The change had been very great even since the regiment had lined up for the fearful ordeal of Chickamauga.

"Did you ever see a gang o' half-baked kids get to be men as quick as these boys?" Si asked Shorty. "Think o' the awkward squads that used to be continually fallin' over their own feet, and stabbing theirselves with their own bayonets."

"Seems so," answered Shorty, "but I don't know that they've growed any faster'n we have. Walt Slusser, who's bin Orderly at Headquarters, says that he heard Capt. McGillicuddy tell Col. McBiddle that he'd never seen men come out as me and you had, and he thought we'd make very effective non-commish."

"Probably we've all growed," Si assented thoughtfully. "Just think o' McBiddle as Lieutenant-Colonel, in place o' old Billings. Remember the first time we saw McBiddle to know him? That time he was Sergeant o' the Guard before Perryville, and was so gentle and soft-spoken that lots o' the boys fooled themselves with the idee that he lacked sand. Same fellers thought that old bellerin' bull Billings was a great fightin' man. What chumps we all wuz that we stood Billings a week."

"Wonder if I'm ever goin' to have a chanst for a little private sociable with Billings? Just as I think

I'm goin' to have it, something interferes. That feller's bin so long ripe for a lickin' that I'm afraid he'll be completely spiled before my chanst comes."

"But I can't git over missin' so many familiar voices in command, and hearin' others in their places," said Si. "That battalion drill they wuz havin' as we come in didn't sound like our rijimint at all. I could always tell which was our rijimint drillin' half a mile away by the sound of the voices. What a ringin' voice Capt. Scudder had. It beat the bugle. You could hear him sing out, 'Co. C, on right, into line! Forward, guide right—March!' farther'n you could the bugle. The last time I heard him wuz as we wuz going up Snodgrass Hill. A rebel bullet went through his head just as he said, 'March!' Now, Lieut. Scripps is in command o' Co. C, and he's got a penny-whistle voice that I can't git used to."

"Lieut. Scripps's a mighty good man. He'll take Co. C as far as Capt. Scudder would."

"I know that Scripps's all right. No discount on him. But it don't seem natural, that's all. Every one o' the companies except ours has a new man in command, and in ours Capt. McGillicuddy's voice has got a different ring to it than before Chickamaugy."

"Practicin' to command the battalion," suggested Shorty. "You know he'll be Major if McBiddle's made a full Kurnel."

"That reminds me," said Shorty, "that our squad o' recruits'll probably fill up the rijimint so's to give McBiddle his eagle. They'll be 'round presently to divide up the squad and assign 'em to companies. As all the companies is about equally strong, they'll

divide 'em equally—that'll make six and one-half boys to each company. Capt. McGillicuddy bein' the senior Captain, is to have first choice. We want to pick out the best six and one-half for our company and put 'em in one squad at the right or left, and give the Captain the wink to choose 'em."

"If we do it's got to be done mighty slick," said Si. "They're all mighty good boys, and spunky. They'll all want to go with us, and if they find out we've made any choice they'll never forgive us. I'd a'most as soon have one six boys as another, yit if I had to pick out six I believe I'd take Harry Joslyn, Gid Mackall, Alf Russell, Monty Scruggs, Jim Humphreys and Sandy Baker."

"And Pete Skidmore," added Shorty. "We've got to take special care o' that little rat. Besides, I want to. Somehow I've took quite a fancy to the brat."

"Yes, we must take little Pete," assented Si. "The proportion's six and one-half to a company. He'll pass for the half man. But it won't do to let him know it. He thinks he's as big as any man in the rijimint. But how're we goin' to fix it not to let the other boys know that we've picked 'em out?"

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Shorty, the man of many wiles. "When the boys are drawed up in line and Capt. McGillicuddy goes down it to pick 'em out, you stand at attention, two paces in front, facin' 'em and lookin' as severe and impartial as a judge on the bench. I'll stand behind you with my leg against your'n, this way, and appearintly fixing my gun-lock. When Cap comes in front o' one that

we want, yo gi' me a little hunch with your leg, and I'll make the lock click."

"Splendid idee," said Si. "I'll go and post the Cap while you git the boys into line."

When Shorty returned to the squad he found them in feverish excitement about the distribution to the different companies. As he and Si had apprehended, all were exceedingly anxious to go with them into Co. Q, which Si and Shorty had unwittingly impressed upon them was the crack company of the regiment, and contained the very cream of the men. To be assigned to any other company seemed to them, if not an actual misfortune, a lack of good luck.

"Nonsense," Shorty replied to their eager entreaties; "all the companies in the 200th Injianny is good, prime, first-class—better'n the companies in any other rijimint. You're playin' in great luck to git into any one o' 'em, I tell you. You might've got into one o' 'em rijimints that're back there at Nashville guardin' fortifications, or one o' 'em that lost their colors at Chickamaugy. I'd ruther be the tail end o' the 200th Injianny, than the Drum Major o' any other."

"That's all right," they shouted. "We're glad we're in the 200th Injianny, but we want to be in Co. Q."

"Well, you can't all be in Co. Q. Only six and one-half of you. The rest's got to go to other companies."

"Say, Corpril," spoke up Harry Joslyn, "you'll see that I git in, won't you? You know I shot that rebel at the burnt bridge."

"And didn't I shoot one, too?" put in Gid Mackall. "Just as much as you did. They want tall men in the company, don't they, Corpril? Not little runts."

"And didn't I watch the crossing down there at the burnt bridge?" pleaded Jim Humphreys.



YOU'VE LOST LITTLE PETE.

"And git scared to death by a nigger huntin' coons," laughed the others.

"Who kept the rebel from gittin' back to the train and settin' it on fire, but me and Sandy Baker?" piped up little Pete Skidmore. "Who got lost, and

nearly killed by a locomotive. Don't that count for nothin'?"

"Boys," said Shorty, leaning on his musket, and speaking with the utmost gravity, "this's a great military dooty and must be performed without fear, favor nor affection. I'd like to have you all in Co. Q, but this's a thing 'bout which I hain't got no say. There's a great many things in the army 'bout which a Corpril hain't as much infloence as he orter have, as you'll find out later on. Here comes the Captain o' Co. Q, who, because o' his rank, has the first pick o' the recruits. He's never seen you before, and don't know one o' you from Adam's off-ox. He has his own ideas as to who he wants in the company, and what he says goes. It may be that the color o' your hair'll decide him, mebbe the look in your eyes, mebbe the shape o' your noses. 'Tention! Right dress! Front! Saloot!"

Capt. McGillicuddy came down at the head of the company officers of the regiment, and took a comprehensive survey of the squad.

"Fine-looking lot of youngsters," he remarked. "They'll make good soldiers."

"Every one o' them true-blue, all wool and a yard wide, Captain," said Si.

"You'll play fair, now, Captain, won't you, and choose for yourself?" said Capt. Scripps. "I've no doubt they're all good boys, but there's a choice in good boys, and that Sergeant of yours has learned where the choice is. You let him stay back, while you go down the line yourself."

"Certainly," replied Capt. McGillicuddy. "Serg't Klegg, stay where you are."

Si saluted and took his position, facing the line, with a look of calm impartiality upon his face. Shorty turned around and backed up to him so that the calves of their legs touched, and began intently studying his gunlock.

Capt. McGillicuddy stepped over to the right of the line stopped in front of Harry Joslyn and Gid Mackall. Shorty full-cocked his gun with two sharp clicks.

"You two step forward one pace," said Capt. McGillicuddy to the two radiant boys, who obeyed with a jump. The Captain walked on down the line, carefully scrutinizing each one, but did not stop until Shorty's gun clicked twice, when he was in front of Alf Russell and Monty Scruggs.

"Step forward one pace," he commanded.

He proceeded on down the line until he came in front of Jim Humphreys and Sandy Baker, when Shorty's gun clicked again.

"You two step forward one pace," he commanded. "Gentleman, I've got my six. The rest are yours."

"But you hain't got me. You've lost me," screamed Pete Skidmore, dismayed at being separated from Sandy Baker. Shorty's gun clicked again.

"I believe that there is a fraction of a half a man to be distributed around," the Captain said, turning to the other officers. "We agreed to draw cuts for that choice. But as that's the smallest boy in the lot I'll take him for my fraction. I think that's fair. Step forward, there, you boy on the left."

"All right, Captain," laughed Capt. Scripps. "You've got the pick of the men, and I'm glad of it."

I know you have, for I've been watching that Corporal of yours. I know him of old. I've played cards too often with Shorty not to keep my eye on him whenever he is around. I saw through that gun-lock trick."

"The trouble with you fellows," responded Capt. McGillicuddy, "is that you are constantly hunting around for some reason rather than the real one for Co. Q being always ahead of you. It isn't my fault that Co. Q is the best company in the regiment. It simply comes natural to the men that make up the company. You gentlemen divide up the rest among you, and then come down to the sutler's and we'll talk the matter over. Serg't Klegg, take these men down to the company and have the Orderly provide for them."

"Hello, awful glad to see you back—and you, too, Shorty," said the busy Orderly-Sergeant, speaking in his usual short, snappy sentences, without using any more words than absolutely necessary. "We need you. Short of non-commish. Two Sergeants off on detached duty and two Corporals in hospital. Being worked for all we're worth. Both of you look fine. Had a nice, long rest. In great shape for work. Pitch in, now, and help me. First, let's get the names of these kids on the roll. Humphreys—we've got two other Humphreys, so you'll answer to Humphreys, 3d.

"But I don't want to be with the Humphreys, sir," broke in Jim. "Me and Monty Scruggs"—

"Hold your tongue," said the Orderly sharply. "Don't interrupt me. If you speak when you're spoken to you'll do all the talking expected of you.

Joslyn, you're after Jones, 3d. M—M—Mackall, you come after Lawrence."

"But you've put me after Joslyn," protested Gid. "He's never ahead of me."

"Shut up," answered the Orderly. "I do the talking for this company. Russell, Scruggs, Skidmore; there, I've got 'em all down. Si, go down toward Co. A and find Bill Stiles and walk him up to the guard-tent and leave him there to cool off. He's got his hide full of coffin varnish somewhere, and of course wants to settle an old score with that Co. A man, who'll likely knock his head off if he catches him. Shorty, go back there to the cook tent and shake up those cooks. Give it to them, for they're getting lazier every day. I want supper ready as soon's we come off dress parade. Here, you boys, trot along after me to the Quartermaster's tent, and draw your blankets, tents, haversacks and canteens. Shorty, as soon's you're through with the cooks, go to the left of the company and start to fixing up a place for these boys' tents. Si, get back as soon's you can, for I want you to take the squad down after rations. Then you'll have to relieve Jake Warder as Sergeant of the Guard, for Jake's hardly able to be around."

The Orderly strode off toward the Quartermaster's tent at such a pace that it gave the boys all they could do to keep up with him. Arriving there he called out sharply to the Quartermaster-Sergeant:

"Wes, give me seven blankets."

That official responded by tossing the required number, one after another, counting them as he did so. As the Orderly caught them he tossed them to

the boys, calling their names. Gid Mackall happened to be looking at a battery of artillery when his name was called, and received the blanket on the back of his neck, knocking him over.

"'Tend to your business, there; don't be gawking around," said the Orderly sternly. "Now, Wes, seven halves of pup-tents."

These were tossed and counted the same way. Then followed canteens, haversacks and tin plates and cups.

"Now, boys, there's your kits. Give you your guns tomorrow. Hurry back to the company street and set up those tents on railroad time, for it's going to rain. Jump, now."

When they reached Shorty he hustled them around to pitch their tents, but he was not fast enough to please the Orderly, who presently appeared, with the remark:

"Cesar's ghost, Shorty, how slow you are. Are you going to be all night getting up two or three tents? Get a move on you, now, for there's a rain coming up, and besides I want you for something else as soon's you're through with this?"

"Who is that man, Corpril?" asked Monty Scruggs, as the Orderly left.

"That's the Orderly-Sergeant of Co. Q."

"Orderly-Sergeant?" repeated Monty dubiously. "Who's he? I've heard of Captains, Majors, Colonels and Generals, but never of Orderly-Sergeants, and yit he seems to be bigger'n all of 'em. He has more to say, and does more orderin' around than all of 'em put together. He even orders you and Sargent Klegg. Is he the biggest man in the army?"

“Well, so far’s you’re concerned and to all general purposes he is. You needn’t pay no partickler attention as a rule to nobody else, but when the Orderly speaks, you jump, and the quicker you jump the better it’ll be for you. He don’t draw as much salary, nor put on as many frills as the bigger fellers, but you hain’t nothin’ to do with that. You kin find fault with the Captain, criticize the Kurnel, and lampoon the General, but you don’t want to give the Orderly no slack. He’s not to be fooled with. Russell, run up there and snatch that spade to dig ditches around these tents.”

“When I enlisted,” Monty confided to Alf Russell, “I thought I’d do my best to become a Captain or a General. Now, I’m dead anxious to be an Orderly-Sarjint.”

CHAPTER V.

THE YOUNG RECRUITS ARE GIVEN AN INITIATION INTO ARMY LIFE.

BY the time Shorty had gotten the boys fairly tented, he was ordered to take a squad and guard some stores at the Division Quartermaster's. Si, instead of going on camp-guard, had to go out to the grand guard. When he came back the next morning the Orderly-Sergeant said to him:

"See here, Si, you've got to take that squad of kids you brung into your particular charge, and lick 'em into shape. They need an awful sight of it, and I hain't got any time to give 'em. I've something else to do besides teaching an infant class. I never was good at bringing children up by hand, anyway. I ain't built that way. I want you to go for them young roosters at once, and get 'em into shape in short meter. Marching orders may come any day, and then we want everybody up and dressed. There'll be no time for foolishness. Those dratted little rats were all over camp last night, and into more kinds of devilment than so many pet crows. I've been hearing about nothing else this morning."

"Why," said Si, "I supposed that they was too tired to do anything but lay down and go to sleep. What'd they do?"

"Better ask what they didn't do," replied the Orderly. "They done everything that a passel o' impish school boys could think of, and what they couldn't think of them smart Alecks down in the



"THEM'S OUR NAMES AND ADDRESSES."

company put 'em up to. I'm going to put some o' them smarties through a course o' sprouts. I like to see boys in good spirits, and I can enjoy a joke with the next man, but there's such a thing as being

too funny. I think a few hours o' extry fatigue duty will reduce their fever for fun."

"Why, what'd they do?" repeated Si.

"Well, in the first place, they got that Joslyn and Mackall to mark a big number 79 on their tents, and then put the same, with their names, on a sheet of paper, and take it up to the Captain's tent.

"The Captain was having a life-and-death rassle with Cap Summerville over their eternal chess, when he's crosser'n two sticks, and liable to snap your head off if you interrupt him. 'Hello, what do you want? What's this?' says he, taking the paper.

"'Them's our names and addresses,' says the brats, cool as cucumbers. 'Thought we ought to give 'em to you, so's you'd know where to find us, in case you wanted us in a hurry, say, at night.'

"'The blazes it is,' says Cap, and Cap Summerville roared. 'You get back to your quarters quick as you can run. Don't worry about my not finding you when I want you. It's my business to find you, and I've got men to help me do it. I'll find you sometime in a way that'll make your hair stand up. Get out, now, and never come around my tent with any such blamed nonsense as that.'

"And Cap Somerville took advantage of the break to snap up Cap's queen, which made him hotter'n ever.

"When the boys got back they found them smart Alecks, Bob Walsh and Andy Sweeney, waiting for 'em, and they consoled 'em, saying, 'That's just the way with that old bull-head. Never'll take no good advice from nobody about running' the company. Thinks he knows it all. You see how he runs the

company. He haint got the addresses o' half his men this minnit, and don't know where they are. That's the reason so many o' our letters from home, and the good things they send us, never reach us. He ought to keep a regler directory, same as in the other companies.' "

"Then some o' them smarties found out that Scruggs was stuck on his spouting. Seems that he was the star declaimer in his school. They laid it in to him that I was soft on hearing poetry spouted, especially after night, when the moon was up, and everything quiet in camp, and that I was particularly tender on 'Bingen on the Rhine.' You know that if there is anything I'm dead sore on it's that sniveling rot. There used to be a pasty-faced boy in school that'd wail that out, and set all the girls to bawling. Then they gave us an entertainment just before we left, and all the girls were there, and Pasty-Face he must be the star attraction. He wailed out his condemned old There-was-a-soldier-of-the Legion—lay-dying-i-n-Algiers, and all the girls looked at us as if we were already dead, and they'd better look out for new beaux. My own particular geranium did not lose any time, but married another feller before we got to Stone River. That made me hate the blasted caterwaul worse'n ever. Then that white-eyed, moon-struck Alfonso used to be yowling it at every chance, until he went to the hospital, and he got all the rest so that they were sputtering rags and tags of it. But I've been sorer than a bile on the condemned sick calfishness ever since I brung my chum Jim Bridgewater off the field at Chickamauga, and watched him die as the moon rose, back there at Mc-

Farland Gap. Well, what do these smarties do but fill up Scruggs with the idea that the best way to make himself forever solid with me was to stroll down close to my tent and casually let off 'Bingen on the Rhine' in his best style. I'd just got down to work on them pesky pay-rolls, having kept Monaghan two days in the guard-house, so's to be sure that he'd be sober enough to help me—and you know Monaghan's lightning with the pen when he's sober—when that possessed sap-sucker Scruggs began blatting out 'Bingen on the Rhine' till you could hear him down to the Colonel's quarters. It made me so mad that I knocked over the ink as I jumped up, and spoiled the triplicate rolls that we'd got about half made out. I snatched up a club to simply mash the bawling brat, but they got him away before I could reach 'im. They explained to Scruggs afterward that I was subject to fits whenever the moon was in her last quarter, and they'd forgotten to look at the almanac that evening. O, but I'll soak 'em for that yet."

"Trouble is," said Si, laughing, "the boys've bin layin' around doin' nothin' too long. They're fuller o' devilment than a dog is of fleas."

"But I haint told you half," continued the Orderly-Sergeant. "Them smarties were quick to find out that Alf Russell and Jim Humphreys leaned strongly toward religion, and they filled 'em with the idea that Cap McGillicuddy was a very devout man, and held family devotions every evening in his tent, in which his company joined."

"Great goodness," gasped Si. "They never heard

Cap's remarks when we balked on a right wheel in company column."

"Well," continued the Orderly, "Cap had been waxed by Cap Summerville two games hand-running, and they were nip-and-tuck on the third, and just as impatient and cross as they always are when they're neck-and-neck in the last heat. The tent-flap raised, and in walked Russell and Humphreys soft and quietlike, as if they were going into the sitting-room for evening prayers. They had their caps in their hands, and didn't say anything but brushed their hair back and took their seats in the first place they could find, which happened to be Cap's cot. Cap didn't notice 'em till after Cap Summerville had caught his queen and then checkmated him in two moves. You know how redhot Cap gets when he loses a game of chess, particularly to Cap Summerville, who rubs it in on him without mercy.

"Cap looked at the boys in astonishment, and then snapped out: 'Well, what do you boys want?' 'We've just come in for evening prayers,' says they, mild as skimmed milk. 'Evening what?' roared the Cap. 'Evening prayers,' says they. 'Don't you have family devotion every evening? Cap Summerville couldn't hold in any longer, and just roared, and the fellers outside, who'd had their ears against the canvas listening to every word, they roared too. Cap was madder'n a July hornet, and cussed till the ridge-pole shook. Then he took the two boys by the ears and marched 'em out and says: 'You two brats go back to your tents and stay there. When I want you to come to my tent I'll send for you, and you'll wish I hadn't. You'll do praying enough if you're on hand

when the church call's sounded. You'll be mightily different from the rest of my company if you don't prefer going on guard to church. Get, now!"

"Now the Captain oughtn't to say that about the company," protested Si. "I for one go to church every chance I get."

"O, yes, you do," sneered the Orderly-Sergeant. "Who was it, I'd like to know, that sent word back to the boys in the rear to steal the Chaplain's horse, and keep him hid for a day or two so's he couldn't get up and hold services, because you boys wanted to go fishing in the Tennessee River?"

"Yes, I did," Si confessed; "but it was because the boys begged me to. We'd just got there, and it looked as if the biting was good, and we probably wouldn't stay there longer'n over Sunday."

"Well, I aint done yet," continued the Orderly-Sergeant. "That little snipe, Pete Skidmore"——

"Good gracious, he wasn't lost again, was he?" gasped Si.

"That's just what he was, the little runt, and we had the devil's own time finding him. What in Sam Hill did the Captain take him for, I'd like to know? Co. Q aint no nursery. Well, the bugler up at Brigade Headquarters blowed some sort of a call, and Skidmore wanted to know what it meant. They told him that it was an order for the youngest man in each company to come up there and get some milk for his coffee tomorrow morning, and butter for his bread. There was only enough issued for the youngest boys, and if he wanted his share he'd have to get a big hustle on him, for the feller whose nose he'd put out o' joint 'd try hard to get there ahead o' him,

and get his share. So Skidmore went off at a dead run toward the sound of the bugle, with the boys looking after him and snickering. But he didn't come back at roll-call, nor at tattoo, and the smart Alecks begun to get scared, and abuse each other for setting up a job on a poor, innocent little boy. Osc Brewster and Ol Perry, who had been foremost in the trick had a fight as to which had been to blame. Taps come, and he didn't get back, and then we all became scared. I'd sent Jim Hunter over to Brigade Headquarters to look for him, but he came back, and said they hadn't seen anything of him there. Then I turned out the whole company to look for him. Of course, them too-awfully smart galoots of Co. A had to get very funny over our trouble. They asked why we didn't get the right kind of nurses for our company, that wouldn't let the members stray out of their sight? Why we didn't call the children in when the chickens went to roost, undress 'em, and tuck 'em in their little beds, and sing to 'em after they'd said 'Now I lay me down to sleep?' I stood it all until that big, hulking Pete Nasmith came down with a camp-kettle, which he was making ring like a bell, as he yelled out, 'Child lost! Child lost!' Behind him was Tub Rawlings singing, 'Empty's the cradle, baby's gone.' Then I pulled off my blouse and slung it into my tent, and told 'em there went my chevrons, and I was simply Scott Ralston, and able to lick any man in Co. A. One o' their Lieutenants came out and ordered them back to their quarters, and I deployed the company in a skirmish-line, and started 'em through the brush toward Brigade Headquarters. About three-quarters o' the way Osc Brewster and Ol Perry, when going through a thicket, heard a boy

boo-hooing. They made their way to him, and there was little Skidmore sitting on a stump, completely confused and fagged out. He'd lost his way, and the more he tried to find it the worse he got turned around. They called out to him, and he blubbered out: 'Yes, it's me; little Pete Skidmore. Them dod-durned fools in my company've lost me, just as I've bin tellin' 'em right along they would, durn 'em.' Osc and Ol were so tickled at finding him that they gathered him up, and come whooping back to camp, carrying him every step of the way."

"Well, I declare to gracious," ejaculated Si. "But there's one left yet. Didn't anything happen to Sandy Baker?"

"O, yes," groaned the Orderly. "He had to be in it, too. He took advantage of the tumult to fall into the company well. We didn't know anything about it till we come back from hunting Skidmore. By that time he was so chilled that he could hardly holler any more, and his teeth chattered like a nigger minstrel's bones. I'd got a can of brandied peaches down at the sutler's, and it took all the brandy to bring him around, and I had nothing left but the peaches. Now, while I like a little variety in camp-life as well as the next man, I don't want no more ructions like last night's. I'll put you in charge of those kids, and hold you responsible for 'em. I don't care what you do with 'em, so long's you keep 'em quiet, and don't disturb the company. Kill 'em, if you want to, but keep 'em quiet. I've got to finish up them pay-rolls tonight."

"You bet me and Shorty'll stop these smart Alecks from imposin' on the poor little greenies," asserted Si.

CHAPTER VI.

SI KLEGG PUTS HIS AWKWARD SQUAD THROUGH ITS FIRST DRILL.

“**I** GUESS,” thought Si, as he left the Orderly-Sergeant, and walked down the company street to the left, “that the best way to begin is to get them little whelps into an awkward squad, and give ’em an hour or two o’ sharp drillin’. That’ll introduce ’em to the realities o’ soljerin’.”

It was a warm, bright March day, with the North Georgia mountains rapidly robing themselves in fresh green, to welcome the coming Spring. The effervescent boys had entirely forgotten the worries of the previous night, and were frolicking in the bright sunshine as if “out-at-recess” from school.

Mackall, Joslyn, Humphreys and Baker had gotten hold of a ball, and were having a game of “two-cornered cat,” with noise enough for a whole school play-ground. Russell and Scruggs were running a foot-race, for the entertainment of a squad of cooks and teamsters, and little Pete Skidmore was giving an exhibition before the same audience of his ability to stand on his head, and turn somersaults.

“Little thought they have of the seriousness of war,” thought Si, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he yelled out:

"Come, boys, fall in here."

When the boys had first come under Si's command they regarded him as one of the greatest men in the army. In their shadowy notions of military matters they rather thought that he stood next to the great Generals whose names filled all mouths. These ideas had been toppled into dust by their arrival in camp, and seeing so many different men order him around. They felt ashamed of themselves that they had ever mistaken him for a great man, and put him up on a pedestal. That is the way with boys. They resent nothing more sharply than the thought of their having been deceived into honoring somebody or something unworthy of honor. They can stand anything better than a reflection upon their shrewdness and judgment.

"Hear Klegg a-calling?" said Joslyn, pausing for an instant, with the ball in his hand.

"Let him call," said Mackall, indifferently, finishing his run to base. "He ain't big boss no more. He's only the lowest Sergeant in the company. Throw the ball, Harry. You must do better'n you've been doing. We're getting away with you."

"Fall in here, boys, I tell you," said Si so sternly that Pete Skidmore stopped in his handspring, but seeing the bigger boys making no move to obey, decided that it would be improper for him to show any signs of weakness, and he executed his flip-flap.

"Here, you're out, Gid. Gi' me the bat," shouted Harry Joslyn, as he caught the ball which Mackall had vainly struck at.

Si strode over to the group, snatched the bat from

Harry's hand, spanked him with it, and started for the others of the group.

"Say, you musn't hit that boy," exclaimed Gid, jumping on Si's back. Gid was as ready to fight for Harry as to fight with him. The others rushed up, school boy like, to defend their companion against "the man," and little Pete Skidmore picked up a stone and adjusted it for throwing.

"Why, you little scamps you," gasped Si in amazement. "What'd you mean? Ain't you goin' to obey my orders?"

"You haint no right to give us orders no more," asserted Humphreys, flourishing his bat defiantly. "You're only an enlisted man, same as the rest o' us. They told us so, last night, and that we mustn't let you impose on us, as you'd bin doin'. Only the Captain and the Colonel command us. We've bin posted. And if you dare hit any o' us we'll all jump on you and maul your head offen you."

The rest looked approval of Jim's brave words.

"We're goin' to strike for our altars and our fires. Strike for the green graves of our sires. God and our native land," declaimed Monty Scruggs.

The waspish little mutiny was so amusing that Si had to smile in spite of himself. With a quick, unexpected movement he snatched the bat from Jim Humphreys' hand, and said good-humoredly:

"Now, boys, you mustn't make fools of yourselves agin'. Stop this nonsense at once, I tell you. I'm just as much your commandin' officer as I ever was."

"How can you be a commanding officer, when everybody else bosses you about?" persisted the argumentative Monty Scruggs. "Everybody that

comes near you orders you around, just the same as you used to us, and you mind 'em. That ain't no way for a commanding officer. We don't want anybody bossing us that everybody else bosses."

"Well, that's the way o' the army," Si explained patiently, "and you've got to git used to it. 'Most everybody bosses somebody else. The President tells Gen. Grant what he wants done. Gen. Grant orders Gen. Thomas to do it. Gen. Thomas orders a Major-General. The Major-General orders a Brigadier-General. The Brigadier-General orders our Colonel. Our Colonel orders Cap McGillicuddy. Cap McGillicuddy orders the Orderly-Sarjint, the Orderly-Sarjint orders me, and I command you."

"Why, it's worse'n 'The-House-That-Jack-Built,' " said Monty Scruggs.

"Well, you needn't learn all of it," said Si. "It's enough for you to know that I command you. That's the A B C of the business, and all you need know. A man in the army gits into trouble offen by knowin' too much. You git it well into your craws that I command you, and that you've got to do just as I say, and I'll do the rest o' the knowin' that you need."

"But how're we to know that you're right every time," argued Monty Scruggs.

"Well," explained the patient Si, "if you've any doubts, go to the Orderly-Sarjint. If he don't satisfy you, go to the Captain. If you have doubts about him, carry it to the Colonel. If you're still in doubt, refer it to the Brigadier-General, then to the Major-General, to Gen. Thomas, Gen. Grant, and lastly to the President of the United States."

"Great goodness!" they gasped.

"But the less you bother your heads with Captains and Curnels and Generals the better you'll git along. The feller that's right over you—in arm's length o' you all the time—is the feller that you've got to look out for sharply. I'm him. Now I want you to form in two ranks quicker'n scat, and 'tend to business. I'm goin' to drill you. Gid Mackall, take your place there. Harry Joslyn, stand behind him."

The old squabbles as to precedence immediately broke out between Gid and Harry, which Si impatiently ended by snatching Harry by the collar and yanking him behind Gid, with the wrathful Harry protesting that he intended carrying the matter up through the whole military hierarchy, even to the President of the United States, if necessary. He did not come into the army to be run over.

"You came into the army to do just as I tell you, and you'll do it. Silence in the ranks," commanded Si. "Humphreys, stand next to Mackall. Scruggs, stand behind Humphreys."

"Why do you put one man behind another?" queried Monty Scruggs. "I don't think that's right. Jim's big head'll be forever in my way, so's I can't see anything. Why don't you put us out in one line, like a class in school? Then everybody's got the same show."

"I didn't make the tactics. Git into your places," snapped Si.

"Well, I don't think much of a teacher that can't explain what he's teaching," mumbled Monty, as he reluctantly obeyed.

"Now, Russell, stand next to Humphreys; Baker,

stand behind Russell; Skidmore, stand next to Russell."

"Goody, I'm in the front rank," giggled little Pete, and Harry Joslyn looked as if here was another case of favoritism that he would have to call the President's attention to.

"Now," commanded Si, "put your heels together, turn your toes out, stand erect, draw your stomachs in"——

"Look here, Jim Humphreys," grumbled Monty Scruggs, "when he told you to draw your stomach in he didn't mean for you to stick your hips out till you bumped me over into the next Township. I've got to have room to stand here, as well as you."

"Silence in the ranks," commanded Si. "Draw your stomachs in, put your little fingers down to the seams of your pantaloons"——

"You mean the middle finger, don't you?" queried Monty Scruggs. "That's more natural way of standing."

"No, I mean the little finger," asserted Si.

"But the middle finger is more natural," persisted Monty. "You can't stand straight with your little finger at the seam. See here."

"Scruggs, do as I say, without no words," said Si, and then Monty's face took on an expression of determination to carry the matter to a higher court.

"Now, keep your faces straight to the front, and at the command 'Right dress!' turn your eyes, without moving your heads, until you kin see the buttons on the breast of the second man to the right. 'Right dress!' "

"There's no man on my right for me to look toward. What 'm I to do?" complained Gid Mackall.

"There, you see what come o' putting him in front," exulted Harry Joslyn. "Now, if I'd bin"——

"Say, I can't see up to Jim Humphreys' big breast



"DRAW YOUR STOMACHS IN."

without twistin' my neck nearly off," murmured little Pete Skidmore. "Can't you make him scrooch a little? Jest see him swell up."

"What's the use o' linin' on a feller that can't stand still a second?" complained the others.

"Great Scott, what a line," groaned Si, walking along, shoving the boys back, and twisting them around, to get them straight. "Crooked as a pumpkin vine in a cornfield. Here, I told you not to turn your heads, but only your eyes. If you snipes wouldn't gab so much, but listen to what I say, you'd git along better. Silence in ranks. Now, try it over again. Faces straight to the front. Eyes cast to the right, until they catch the buttons on the breast of the second man. Right dress!"

"Great grief," sighed he, looking at the result. "You wriggle about like so many eels. Might as well try to line up so many kittens. Won't you straighten up and keep straight?" Then came a renewal of the noisy discussion, with mutual blaming of one another.

Si picked up a stick and drew a line in the ground. "Now bring your toes to that line, and keep 'em there."

"Shall we take that scratch along with us as we march, or will you draw another one for us as we need it?" Monty Scruggs asked, at which the other boys laughed, which did not improve Si's temper. It was long, hard work before he got the restless, talkative young fellows so that they would form a fairly straight line, and maintain it for a minute or two.

He looked at them, wiped his perspiring brow, and remarked internally:

"Well, I thought them was bright boys, that it'd be no trouble to drill. I'd ruther break in the stoopidest lot o' hayseeds that ever breathed, rather than boys that think they know more'n I do. Now I'm

goin' to have the time o' my life learnin' 'em the right face."

He began the explanation of that complicated manuver:

"Now, I want every one o' you to stop talkin', gether up them scatter-fire brains o' your'n, and pay strict 'tention to every word I say"——

"Harry Joslyn," broke in Gid, "if you tramp on my heels just one more time, I'll knock your head off. I've told you often enough."

"Well, you just keep offen my toes with them rock-grinders o' your'n," Harry retorted.

"Silence in ranks," commanded Si. "Each rank will count twos."

"What are twos? Where are they, and how many of 'em do you want us to count?" asked Monty Scruggs, at which the other boys snickered. They were getting very tired of the drill, and in the humor to nag and balk the drillmaster. Si lost a trifle of his temper, and said:

"You're too all-fired smart with your tongue, Scruggs. If you were only half as smart learnin' your business"——

"Sergeant," said one of the Lieutenants who happened to be passing, "keep your temper. You'll get along better. Don't squabble with your men."

This made the boys much worse.

"What I mean by countin' twos," explained Si, "is that the man on the right in each rank shall count one, the next one, two; the next one, one and so on. Count twos!"

They made such an exasperating muddle of it, that Si almost had a fit. The cooks, teamsters and other

hangers-on saw the trouble and came flocking around with all manner of jesting remarks and laughter, which strained Si's temper to the utmost, and encouraged the boys in their perversity. Si curbed himself down, and laboriously exemplified the manner of counting until the boys had no excuse for not understanding it.

"Now, said he, at the command 'Right face,' the No. 1 man in the front rank faces to the right and stand fast"——

"What do the rest of us do?" they chorused.

"The rest o' you chase yourselves around him," said a humorist among the cooks, while the others laughed uproariously.

"Shut up, you pot-wrastlers," said Si wrathfully. "If I hear another word from you, I'll light into you with a club. Now you brats"——

"Sergeant," admonished the Lieutenant, "you mustn't use such language to your men."

This made Si angrier, and the boys more cantankerous. Si controlled himself to go on with his explanations in a calm tone:

"No 1 in the front rank will face to the right, and stand fast, and take a side step to the right. Each No. 2 will face to the right, and take an oblique side step to the right to place himself on the right hand of his No. 1 man."

"Say that all again, Sergeant," asked Monty Scruggs.

Si patiently repeated the explanation.

"Now sing it to the tune of 'When this Cruel War is Over,' called out the cook-humorist.

"Right face," commanded Si.

A roar went up from the camp-follower audience at the hopeless tangle which ensued. No two of the boys seemed to have done the same thing. Several had turned to the left, and all were sprinting around in various ways in a more or less genuine pretense of executing the order. Meanwhile the news that Si's squad of recruits were having fun with him spread through the camp, and a crowd gathered to watch the performance and give their jeering advice in that characteristic soldierly way when they see a comrade wrestling with a perplexing job.

"Git a bushel basket, and gather 'em up in it."

"Tie straw around their left feet, and hay around their right ones, so's they'll know 'em."

"Back 'em up agin' a rail fence and git 'em into line;" were among the freely offered suggestions. Si was sweating all over, and so angry that he had to stolidly bite his words off, one at a time, to keep from showing his temper. To add to his troubles, he saw the Colonel, of whom he stood in proper awe, become interested in the crowd and the shouting, and stroll down from his tent to see what the excitement was.

"As you were," Si commanded, steadying his voice with a great effort. "Every one of you git back as I placed you. Right dress!"

To his wonderment they formed as good a line as veterans could have done. They heard a whisper that the Colonel was coming, and it sobered them.

"Right face!" commanded Si.

They all faced to the right and stepped into their places without an error.

"Front!" commanded Si, and they returned to two ranks.

"Ah, Sergeant," said the Colonel, kindly, as he made his way through the respectfully opened, saluting crowd. "Giving your men their first drill, are you? Well, you are getting along remarkably well for recruits. I saw that last movement, and it was very well done, indeed. You've got some very nice-looking boys there, and I think they'll be a credit to the regiment."

"Saved by the skin o' my teeth," gasped Si to himself, as the Colonel strolled on. "Now, you young roosters, I see that you kin do it whenever you want to, and you've got to want to after this. A boy that don't want to I'll take down to the branch there, and hold his head under water till he does want to. I'm goin' to stay with you until you learn the drill dead letter perfect. You can't git rid of me. You'll save trouble by rememberin' that. Now we'll go back for supper. Right face—forward—file left—March!"

CHAPTER VII.

SHORTY'S HEART TURNS TOWARD MARIA, AND HE
FINALLY GETS A LETTER FROM HER.

AFTER the flush of excitement of returning to his old regiment and meeting his comrades—after the process of readjusting himself to the changed relations made by death, wounds, discharges, resignations and promotions—after the days had brought a settling back into the old routine of camp-life, there developed in Shorty's heart growing homesickness for Maria Klegg.

At least that was what it seemed to him. He did not exactly know what homesickness was from personal experience, as he had never really had a home. But he had seen thousands of boys more or less affected by that obscure but stubborn and dangerous malady, and had noted their symptoms, which strongly resembled his own.

Somehow, the sun only shone with real brightness and warmth over the pleasant homes and fertile fields of Posey County, Ind. Somehow, women had a fairness and sweetness there denied to their sex elsewhere, and somehow the flower of them all was a buxom maiden of 20 dwelling under the roof of Deacon Klegg.

Shorty appreciated very properly the dignity and

responsibilities of his two stripes. He was going to be the model Corporal of the regiment, and give all the rest a copy which they could follow to advantage. Of all the Corporals he had ever known, Si Klegg had come nearest his ideas as to what a Corporal should be, but even Si had his limitations. He would show him some improvements. So shorty bent his mind upon the performance of everything pertaining to the Corporalcy with promptness and zeal. He even set to studying the Regulations and Tactics—at least those paragraphs relating to Corporals and their duties—where heretofore he had despised “book-soldiering,” and relied on quick observation and “horse sense” to teach him all that was worth knowing. But his stay in the Deacon’s home showed him that they esteemed “book-knowledge” even in common things as of much value, and he began to have a new respect for that source of instruction.

Even through the pressure of official duties and responsibilities there would steal, like the wafting of a sweet song to the ears of the reapers in a hot field, thoughts of the coolness, the beauty and the peace of that quiet home on the Wabash, with one flower-faced girl, with white, soft arms, going about her daily tasks, singing with such blithe cheeriness that even the birds stopped to listen to a sweeter note than theirs. Some subtle fragrance from her seemed to be with him wherever he was, and whatever he might be doing. When, as the tallest Corporal in Co. Q, he stood on the right of the company, on drill and dress parade, and made the others “dress” on him, he wished that Maria Klegg could only see how straight the line was, and how soldierly the boys

looked. When the Colonel personally selected him to command the squad which was to escort the Paymaster through a dangerous part of the country, he would have given much had Maria known of the



"A LETTER FROM MARIA."

trust reposed in him. And when, as Corporal of the Guard, he suppressed in his usual summary way a noisy row among the teamsters and cooks, he was very glad that Maria did not hear the remarks that

a Corporal always thinks necessary to make on such occasions. Shorty did not swear with the fluent ease of before his visit to the Klegg homestead, but a little excitement gave the old looseness to his tongue. And when he sat around the guard-fire, he would refuse to be drawn into any "little games," but turn his back upon the chattering crowd, and furtively draw from his breast-pocket the remnant of Maria's dress, and feel it, and muse over it, until aroused by the call:

"Corporal of the Guard, Post No. 14. I want a drink o' water."

Shorty began to watch for Si's mail a good deal more anxiously than that worthy did. He managed to go by the Chaplain's tent whenever duty took him in that part of the camp, and sometimes when it did not, and inquire if there was any mail there for Si. One day he was rewarded by the Chaplain handing him two letters. His heart beat a little quicker by seeing that they were both postmarked Bean Blossom Creek. The smaller—a white envelope, superscribed in Annabel's cramped little hand—he thrust indifferently into his pocket, and the larger—a fat, yellow envelope, covered with the good Deacon's massive crow-tracks, and securely fastened by a dab of sealing wax, pressed down with a cent—he studied with tender interest. It had come directly from her home—from her father. It probably told something about her.

It seemed as if there was something of the perfume of her presence about it. Possibly she had carried it to the station and mailed it. He turned it over gently, studied every detail, and fixed his eyes

upon it, as if he would make them pierce the thick, strong paper and devour the contents. Then it occurred to him that the better and quicker way to get at the inside would be to deliver the letters to Si. So he hunted up his partner, whom he found about to take his squad out for a turn at wagon guarding.

Si looked pleased as he recognized his father's letter, but his face flushed to the roots of his sandy hair at the sight of Annabel's. He put the latter carefully in his pocket. It was too sweet and sacred a thing to be opened and read under the gaze of any one else's eyes. He broke open his father's and as his eyes traveled slowly down the large foolscap pages, covered with the Deacon's full-grown characters, for the Deacon made his letters as he liked his stock—big and full—he said:

“They're all well at home, but mother's had a tech of her old rheumatiz. Pap's sold his wheat at a dollar and four bits. Peaches about half killed. Had good luck with his lambs. Wheat's lookin' unusually well. Beck Spangler's married Josh Wilson, whose wife died last Fall, leavin' him two little children. Brindle cow's come in fresh, with a nice calf, quarter Jersey. Copperhead's gittin' sassy agin. Holdin' night meetin's and wearin' butternut badges, and talkin' about resistin' draft. Hogs wintered well, and looks as if Pap'd have a nice drove to sell in the Fall. Pap'll put in 'bout 90 acres o' corn, and'll have to hustle his plowin' ez soon's the ground's fit. Little Sammy Woggles had a fight with Beecham's boy, who's six months older, and licked him. Sammy likes school better now than he did. Pap's bought Abraham Lincoln a new suit o' store clothes and the

girls have made him some white shirts. He goes to church every Sunday now, and carries a cane. Pap sends his regards to you, Shorty, and mother and the girls want to be kindly remembered. There, take the letter, Shorty, and read it for yourself. I've got to skip out with my squad."

Shorty took the letter with eagerness, and retired to a nook to read it all over carefully, and see if he could not mayhap glean out of it something more relating to Her. But the main satisfaction was in reading again and again "Mother and the girls want to be kindly remembered to Shorty."

"Not uncomfortably warm, and purty general, like the gal who promised to be a sister to the hull riji-mint," mused Shorty, as he refolded the letter and replaced it in the envelope. "But, then, it is better to be kindly remembered by sich people as them than to be slobbered over by anybody else in the world. Wisht I knowed jest how much o' the kind remembrance was Maria's, and if it differed in any way from her mother's and sister's?"

The next evening the Orderly-Sergeant handed Shorty a badly-thumb-marked and blotted yellow envelope, on which was scrawled in a very schoolish hand:

"To Mister Corpril Elliott,
"Co. Q, Two Hundred Injianny Volintears,
"Chattynoogy, 10-S-E."

Opening it he read:

Mister Shortee

U ar a Frawd!!! That's what U ar!!!

Whairz mi Gunn??????

U ar a long-shanked, brick-topt Frawd & a promis-braker!!!

Whairz mi Gunn???

U hav now bin away a hole month, & I haint seen no Gunn!

Awl the boiz is makin fun ov Me, bekaws I blowed around bout the Gunn I waz going 2 git, & I didn't git none.

Whairz mi Gunn???

I likked Ans. Beechum till he hollered nuff, for teezin Me bout mi Gunn. That's quiled the other boiz.

But I want mi Gunn!

I have just lots & Gobs 2 tell U, bout what Maria's bin sayin bout yore saffron head, but I shant write a word till I git mi Gunn!

I wont tell U how the girls is pleggin her bout her Big Sunflower till I git mi Gunn!

If U doant send mi Gunn rite off Ile tel Maria everything I no.

I tel U now, Ile spile yore fun

Onless at once U send mi Gunn.

Yores til deth,

SAMUEL WOGGLES.

The reception of this perturbed Shorty to his depths. He had not forgotten his promise to Sammy—merely postponed its execution under the pressure of other engrossments. He reproached himself for not remembering how eagerly the boy had been looking forward to a possession which would make him the envy of the other boys—really hated by them for his towering and undeserved fortune.

“And Maria and the girls is talkin' about me,” he

communed with himself. "I knowed that my left ear hadn't bin burnin' ever since we crossed the Ohio River for nothin'. I thought it was because it'd got so tender layin' on pillers that the blankets chafed it. Now I understand it. And I can't hear nothin' of what they've bin sayin' till I git that gun to Sammy. I'll start it to him this day, if it takes a leg. I'd intended to go over to the camp o' the Maumee Muskrats today, on a missionary tower with them new tricks I brung back with me, but I'll put in the time gittin' Sammy's gun and shippin' it to him. Wonder where I kin pick up a rebel musket and trimmins'?"

Shorty did not find this so easy as he had anticipated. Generally, rebel guns had been a drug in the market. They could be found lying around camp almost anywhere, and were used for any purpose to which they could be applied—poles to hang kettles on over the fire, tent-sticks, revetments to hold the dirt back, or any other use. But under the rigid system now prevailing in Sherman's camps everything had to be accounted for, and every gun sufficiently serviceable to be worth sending to Sammy had been gathered up and stored away in a large shed. Shorty went down there and scrutinized the armory. There were plenty of guns in there, any one of which would make Sammy's heart leap for joy, and render him the object of the burning envy of all the boys for miles around. But there were guards pacing around, and they looked watchful. Still, if the night were dark he might slip in and steal one. But somehow since he had known Maria there had risen in his mind a repugnance to that way of procuring things. It was not in accordance with Klegg ideas. He sat

down and pondered on other methods. He went over and talked to the Sergeant in charge, an old acquaintance, but the Sergeant was obdurate.

"No, sir. Can't let one of 'em go on no account," said the Sergeant firmly. "My Captain's in charge of 'em, and he's put me in charge. He knows he can trust me, and I know that he can. He don't know how many guns and bayonets and cartridge-boxes there are, but I do, for I counted them first thing when I come on. I don't propose that he shall have to have any shortage charged against him when he comes to settle his accounts. I don't know whether they've got an account of the things at Headquarters, but they're likely to have, and I'm not taking any risks. I'm looking out for my Captain."

"But suppose I pay you the value of the blamed old blunderbuss," said Shorty, as a desperate resort, for it was the first time that he had ever thought of a rebel gun having a money value.

"I wouldn't take it," replied the Sergeant. "First place, I haint no idea what they're worth. Next place, if I had, I wouldn't take it, for I don't want any shortage in Cap's accounts. Thirdly, if I took the money I'd like as not set into a game o' poker tonight and lose it, and then where'd I be, and where'd Cap be? I've been having monstrous hard luck at poker lately."

"That's because you ain't up to the latest kinks," said Shorty, hopefully. "I've been back to the rear—just come from Jeffersonville—and I've got on to a lot of new dodges. I'll show 'em all to you for one o' them guns."

The waver in the Sergeant's face showed the temptation was a trying one, but he answered firmly:

"No; I won't do it."

"I'll put up a \$10 bill agin one o' the guns, play you two out o' three for it, learn you the tricks, and give you back the money if I win," said Shorty desperately.

Again the Sergeant's face showed great irresolution, but again his fidelity triumphed, and he answered firmly, "No I won't." Then he softened his refusal by saying:

"Come, Shorty, walk over a little way with me. I know where we can get something good."

After they had shared a tincupful of applejack that a teamster supplied them the Sergeant's heart thawed out a little.

"I tell you, Shorty, there's a gun in there that'd just tickle your boy to death. It's an Enfield, new one, and has a Yankee bullet sticking in the butt. Must've knocked the Johnny a double somersault when it struck. I've been thinkin' sending it home myself. But I'll let you have it, and I'll tell you you how you can get it. See that camp over there? Well, that's a regiment being organized out o' Tennessee refugees. They and their officers are the carelessst lot of galoots that ever lived. Their Quartermaster stores and their Commissary stores, and everything they have is allowed to lie around loose, just wherever they get the notion to drop them. I've had my eye on 'em for several days, and've helped several of my friends to straighten up their company accounts, and replace things that they'd lost. You just waltz over there, careless like,

as if you belonged to the regiment, pick up a gun and traps, put 'em on, and sail back here, and I'll turn your things in, and give you that gun with the bullet in the stock in exchange."

Shorty lost no time in acting on the advice. That afternoon the express from Chattanooga carried a gun to Sammy Woggles, the contemplation of which deprived that youth of sleep the night after he received it, and won him the cordial hatred of every boy in his neighborhood for his overweening pride.

But after the gun was gone, and after Shorty had written a laborious letter, informing Sammy of the shipment of the gun and its history, which letter inclosed a crisp greenback, and was almost as urgent in injunctions to Sammy to write as Sammy had been about his piece of ordnance, Shorty sat down in sadness of heart. He was famishing for information from Maria, and at the lowest calculation he could not hope for a letter from Sammy for two weeks.

"It'll take at least a week for that little rat to git over his fever about that gun," he mused, "until he'll be able to set up and think about anything else. Then it'll take him at least another week to build a letter. Great Jehosephat, how'm I goin' to stand it till then? Where'll I be two weeks from now? What kin I do? I a'most wish that something'd happen to Si that'd give me an excuse for writin'."

He racked his fertile brain with expedients and devices for getting up communication, but for once he had to reject them all. There was a halo of unapproachableness about Maria Klegg that paralyzed him.

He awoke the next morning with the same anxiety gnawing at his heart, and it haunted him so that he went through the morning's routine mechanically. When he came back from taking a squad up to Headquarters to report for fatigue duty, the Orderly-Sergeant called out:

"Here's a letter for you, Corporal Elliott."

Shorty took the small white envelope from the Orderly's hand, and looked at it curiously. Who could it be from? It resembled somewhat the letters that once came from Bad Ax, Wis., but then again it was very different. He studied the handwriting, which was entirely strange to him. Then he was electrified by seeing that the postmark seemed to be something the same as on Si's letters, but was blurred. He gave a little gasp, and said:

"Orderly, I'd like to git off a little while today."

"Why, Shorty," remonstrated the busy Sergeant, "you were off yesterday. But go. I'll try to get along without you. Don't stay long."

Shorty would not trust himself to more than look at the outside, until he had gained a safe screen behind a clump of bushes. Then he took out his knife, carefully slit the envelope, and read:

Dear Mr. Elliot—

I take my pen in hand to inform you that we are all in good health and hope you are enjoyin' the same blessing fur which we should all be thankful to God. I am over on a visit to Prairie Hen and Mrs. Skidmore a widow woman called to see me today In the course of conversation she said her little boy Peter had run off and shed hurd hed joined the

200th Indiana Volunteer Infantry. She heard that we had folks in that regiment and so had come over to see me to see if I knowed anybody that would give her any news about her boy so as she could ask them to look out for him. I told her I knowed a gentleman in the 200th Indiana who would look out for Peter and be a second father to him and as soon as she had went I started this epistle. I thot id answer my letters because its all he can do to write answer my letter sbecause its all he can do to write to mother and Annabel and dont write to mother haf often enuf besides id like to hear from you myself.

Sincerely Yore Friend

Maria Klegg.

“M-a-r-i-a-r K-l-e-g-g,” gasped Shorty, spelling over the letters, one at a time, to make sure that his eyes were not making a fool of him. “And she’d like to hear from me.”

And he took off his hat, and fanned his burning face.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHORTY WRITES A LETTER TO MARIA KLEGG AND ENTERS UPON HIS PARENTAL RELATIONS TO LITTLE PETE SKIDMORE.

THE self-sufficient, self-reliant Shorty had never before had anything to so completely daze him.

"Ackchelly a letter from Maria Klegg. Writ of her own free will and accord. *And she wants to hear from me,*" he murmured, reading the letter over and over again, and scanning the envelope as if by intensity of gaze he would wring more from the mute white paper. The thought was overpowering that it had come directly from her soft hand; that she had written his name upon it; that her lips had touched the stamp upon it. He tenderly folded up the letter and replaced it in the envelope. His thoughts were too tumultuous for him to sit still. He would walk and calm himself. He wrapped the piece of Maria's dress around the letter, rose and started off. He had gone but a few steps when it seemed to him that he had not caught the full meaning of some of the words in the letter. He sought a secluded place where he could sit down, unseen by any eyes, and read the letter all over again several times. Then came the disturbing thought of how he was to care for and

protect the precious missive? He could not bear to part with it for a single minute, and yet he did not want to carry the sacred thing around exposed to the dirt and moil of daily camp-life and the danger of loss. He thought long and earnestly, and at last went down to a large sutler's store, and purchased the finest morocco wallet from his stock. Even this did not seem a sufficiently rich casket for such a gem, and he bought a large red silk bandana, in which he carefully wrapped letter, dress fragment and wallet, and put them in the pocket of his flannel shirt, next his breast. Next came the momentous duty of writing an answer to the letter. Yesterday he was burning with a desire to make an opportunity to write. Now the opportunity was at hand, the object of his desires had actually asked him to write her, and the completeness of the opportunity unnerved him.

"The first thing I have got to do," said he, "is to git some paper and envelopes and ink. I don't s'pose they've got anything here fit for a gentleman to write to a lady with." He turned over the sutler's stock of stationery disdainfully, and finally secured a full quire of heavy, gilt-edged paper, and a package of envelopes, on which was depicted a red-and-blue soldier, with a flag in one hand and a gun in the other, charging bayonets through a storm of bursting shells.

"It's true I ain't one o' the color-guard yit," mused Shorty, studying the picture, "but the Colonel sorter hinted that I might be, if Cap McGillicuddy could spare me from Co. Q, which ain't at all likely. Now, Mister, le'me see some pens."

"Here's some—Gillott's—best quality," said the sutler's clerk.

"Naw," said Shorty contemptuously. "Don't want no common steel pens. Goin' to write to a lady. Git me your best gold ones."

Shorty made quite a pretense of trying, as he had seen penmen do, the temper of the pens upon his thumb-nail, but chose the largest and highest priced one, in an elaborate silver holder.

"I'm very partickler 'bout my pens," said he to the clerk. "I must have 'em to just suit my hand. Some folks's very keerless about what they write with, but I wasn't brung up that way."

"If you'd ask my advice," said the clerk, "I'd recommend this thing as the best for you to use. It'd suit fine Italian hand better'n any pen ever made."

And he held up a marking-pot and brush.

"Young man," said Shorty, solemnly, as he paid for his purchases, "the condition o' your health requires you not to try to be funny. It's one o' the dangerousest things in the army. You're exposed to a great many complaints down here, but nothin' 'll send you to the hospital as suddenly as bein' funny."

The next thing was a studio where he could conduct his literary task without interruption, and Shorty finally found a rock surrounded by bushes, where he could sit and commune with his thoughts. He got the cover of a cracker-box, to place on his knees and serve for a desk, laid his stationery down beside him, re-read Maria's letter several times, spoiled several sheets of paper in trying to get his fingers limber enough for chirography, and then,

begun the hardest, most anxious afternoon's work he had ever done, in writing the following letter:

"Camp ov the 2 Hunderdth Injianny

"Voluntear Infantry,

"Mishun Rij, nere Chattynoogy, April the
10, 1864.

"Miss Maria Klegg,

"Respected Frend.

(This part of the letter had cost Shorty nearly an hour of anxious thought. He had at first written "Dere Miss Maria," and then recoiled, shuddered and blushed at the thought of the affectionate familiarity implied. Then he had scrawled, one after another, the whole gamut of beginnings, before he decided upon addressing her, as was her right, as formally as he would the wife of the President.

"Yore letter was welcomer to me than the visit ov the Pamaster, after six months exclipse ov hiz cheerful mug."

("I think 'mug' is the word they use for face in good society," mused Shorty, with the end of the penholder in his mouth. "At least I heard the Kurnel use it one day. She can't expect no man to be much gladder of anything than the comin' o' the Paymaster, and that orter please her.")

"Thankee for yore kind inkwiries az to mi helth? Ime glad to say that Ime all rite, and sound in tung, body and runnin' gear, and"——

(Shorty was on the point of adding "Hope that you are enjoying the same blessing," when a shiver passed through him that it might be improper to

allude to a young lady's locomotory apparatus. After deep meditation, he took safety's side and added) :

"So's Si. I sinserely hoap that you are injoyin' the blessin's ov helth, and the konsolashuns ov religion."

("I'm not certain about that last," thought Shorty, "but I heard a preacher say it once, and it ought to be all right to write to a young lady.")

"We are still layin' in camp, but expectin' every day orders to move out for a little soshable with Mister Joe Johnston, whose roostin over on Pigeon Mountain. When we git at him, there won't be no pigeon about it, but a game ov fox-and-geese with us for the foxes.

("There," mused Shorty, complacently; "that'll amuse her. Girls like a little fun throwed into letters, when it's entirely respectful.)

"Little Pete Skidmore is in the company, all rite. He is wun ov the nicest boys that ever lived, but he needs half-killin' nerely every day. All real nice boys do. Woodent give much for them if they diddent. Tel his mother Ile look out for him, and fetch him up in the way he shood go, if I haf to break every bone in his body. She needent worry. I no awl about boys. Thair like colts—need to be well-broke before thair enny akount."

("Now," commented Shorty, as he read what he had written, "that'll make Maria and his mother feel easy in their minds. They'll think they're in great luck to git a man who'll be a second father to Pete, and not risk spilin the child by sparin the rod.")

("Great Jehosephat, what work writing to a young lady is. I'd much ruther build breastworks or make

roads. Now, if it was some ordinary woman, I wouldn't have to be careful about my spelin' and gramer, but with sich a lady as Maria Klegg—great Cesar's ghost! a man must do the very best that's in him, and then that ain't half enough. But I must hurry and finish this letter this afternoon. I can't git another day off to work at it.")

"Respected Miss Maria, what a fine writer you are. Yore handwritin' is the most beautiful I ever seen. Jeb Smith, our company clerk, thinks that he can slink ink to beat old Spencerian System hisself, but he ain't once with you. Ide ruther see one line ov your beautiful ritin' than all that he ever writ."

("That's so," said Shorty, after judicially scanning the sentence. "Jeb kin do some awful fancy kurlys, and draw a bird without takin' his pen from the paper, but he never writ my name a thousandth part as purty as Maria kin.")

"And how purty you spel. Ime something ov a speler myself, and can nock out most ov the boys in the company on Webster's Primary, but I aint to be menshuned in the saim day with you.

"With best respecks to your family, and hoapin soon to here from you, I am very respeckfully, your friend,

W. L. Elliot.

Corpril, Company Q, 2 Hunderdth Injianny Volintear Infantry."

By the time he had his letter finished, and was wiping the sweat of intense labor from his brow, he heard the bugle sounding the first call for dress

parade. "I must go and begin my fatherly dooties to little Pete Skidmore," he said, carefully sealing his letter and sticking a stamp on it, to mail at the Chaplain's tent as he went by. "It's goin' to be extry fatigue to be daddy to a little cuss as lively as a schoolhouse flea, and Corpril of Co. Q, at the same time, but I'm going to do it, if it breaks a leg."

He was passing a clump of barberry bushes when he overheard Pete Skidmore's voice inside:

"I'll bet \$10 I kin pick it out every time. I'll bet \$25 I kin pick it out this time. Don't tech the cards."

"I don't want to lose no more money on baby bets," replied a tantalizing voice. "I'll make it \$40 or nothin'. Now, youngster, if y're a man"——

Shorty softly parted the bushes and looked in. Two of the well-known sharpers who hung around the camps had enticed little Pete in there, and to a game of three-card monte. They had inflamed his boyish conceit by allowing him to pick out two cards in succession, and with small bets.

"I hain't got but \$40 left o' my bounty and first month's pay," said little Pete irresolutely, "and I wanted to send \$35 of it home to mother, but I'll"——

"You'll do nothin' o' the kind," shouted Shorty, bursting through the bushes. "You measly whelps, hain't you a grain o' manhood left? Ain't you ashamed to swindle a green little kid out o' the money that he wants to send to his widowed mother?"

"Go off and 'tend to your own business, if you know what's good for you," said the larger of the men threateningly. "Keep your spoon out o' other

folks' soup. This young man knows what he's about. He kin take care o' himself. He ain't no chicken. You ain't his guardeen."



PETE GETS LICKED.

"No he ain't," said Pete Skidmore, whose vanity was touched as well as his cupidity aroused. "Mind your own business, Mister Elliott. You're only a Corpril anyway. You hain't nothin' to do with me outside the company. I kin take care o' myself. I've beat these men twice, and kin do it again."

"Clear out, now, if you don't want to git hurt," said the larger man, moving his hand toward his hip.

Shorty's response was to kick over the board on which the cards were lying, and knock the man sprawling with a back-handed blow. He made a long pass at the other man, who avoided it, and ran away. Shorty took Pete by the collar and drew him out of the bushes, in spite of that youngster's kicks and protestations.

He halted there, pulled out his pocket-knife, and judicially selected a hickory limb, which he cut and carefully pruned.

"What're you goin' to do?" asked Pete apprehensively.

"I'm goin' to give you a lesson on the evils of gamblin', Pete, especially when you don't know how."

"But I did know how," persisted Pete. "I beat them fellers twice, and could beat them every time. I could see quicker'n they could move their hands."

"You little fool, you knowed about as much about them cards as they know of ice-water in the place where Jeff Davis is goin'. Pete, I'm goin' to be a second father to you."

"Dod durn you, who asked you to be a daddy to me? I've had one already. When I want another, I'll pick one out to suit myself," and Pete looked

around for a stone or a club with which to defend himself.

"Pete," said Shorty solemnly as he finished trimming the switch, and replaced the knife in his pocket, "nobody's allowed to pick out his own daddy in this world. He just gits him. It's one o' the mysterious ways o' Providence. You've got me through one o' them mysterious ways o' Providence, and you can't git shet o' me. I'm goin' to lick you still harder for swearin' before your father, and sayin' disrespeckful words to him. And I'm goin' to lick you till you promise never to tech another card until I learn you you how to play, which'll be never. Come here, my son."

The yells that soon rose from that thicket would have indicated that either a boy was being skinned alive or was having his face washed by his mother.

CHAPTER IX.

SI TAKES HIS BOYS FOR A LITTLE MARCH INTO THE COUNTRY.

“S I,” said the Orderly-Sergeant, “here’s a chance to give them pin-feather roosters o’ yours a little taste of active service, that’ll be good seasoning for ’em, and help develop their hackles and spurs.”

“Good idee. What is it?” responded Si with alacrity.

“An order’s come down from Headquarters to detail a Sergeant and eight men from the company to go out about eight or 10 miles in the country, and take a turn guarding a little mill they’re running out there, grinding meal. There’s a gang of bush-whackers around there, that occasionally pester the men at work and they’ve tried once to burn the mill. I don’t think you’ll have much trouble, but you’ve got to keep your eye peeled, and not let any of your boys go to sleep on post.”

“I’ll look out for that.”

“I know you will. You’ll take Shorty along, and your seven kids, which’ll make up the number. You’ll draw three days’ rations, at the end of which time you’ll be relieved.”

“Now, boys,” said Si, returning to his squad, “we

won't drill today, but are going out on some real soldierin'. The Kurnel has given us a very important detail."

The boys swelled up visibly at the news.

"I want you to all act like soldiers, now," continued Si, "and be a credit to the company and the rijiment. We're goin' to be all by ourselves, and everybody's eyes 'll be on us."

"Yes," echoed Shorty, "we'll be the only part o' the rijiment at the front, and we want to git a good stiff brace on ourselves, because if we don't some o' these other rijiments may git the grand laugh on us."

Shorty's tone was that this was a calamity to which death was preferable, and the boys were correspondingly impressed. They were rapidly learning the lesson that the regiment and its reputation were the most important things in the whole world.

"Come along, and le's draw our rations," said Si. "And you boys want to keep in mind that this's all you'll git for three days, and govern yourselves accordingly. The 'Leventh Commandment is to take all that you kin git, and take mighty good care of it after you git it"——

"For sich is the Kingdom of Heaven," interjected Shorty, imitating the Chaplain's tone.

"No," said Si, who was irritated by his partner's irreverence: "but it's the way a good soldier does. His first dooty's to take care o' his grub, because that's takin' care o' himself, and keepin' himself in good shape to do the dooty the Government expects o' him. 'Tain't servin' the Government right for him to be careless about himself. Now here's 27 rations

o' bread, meat, coffee, sugar, salt and beans—three apiece for each of us. Harry Joslyn, you and Gid Mack divide them up into nine equal piles."

Si and Shorty turned to give directions about packing up the shelter-tents and blankets for carrying.

"Now, Gid Mackall," said Harry, "play fair, if you ever did in your life. I won't have none o' your shenanniging."

"Don't talk to me about shenanniging, you little imp," responded Gid cordially. "You can't do a straight thing if you try, and you never try. You never fisted-up with me on a ball-bat that you didn't slip your hand so's to come out ahead."

"Now, there's three loaves o' bread for the Sargint," said Harry, laying them down on a newspaper. "There's three for the Corpril; there's three for me; there's three for you."

"Here, what're you givin' me that broken loaf for?" demanded Gid, stopping in his distribution of meat. Give that to Pete Skidmore. He's the littlest."

"Ain't goin' to do nothin' o' the kind," responded Harry. "You've got to take things as they come. That loaf fell to you, and you've got to keep it."

"If you don't take that nubbin loaf away and put a full one in its place, not a speck o' lean meat 'll you get—nothin' but fat six inches thick."

"You'll cut that meat straight across, and give me my right share o' lean, you puddin'-headed, sand-hill crane," shouted Harry.

"Who're you a-calling names, you bow-legged little shrimp?" shouted Gid, slapping Harry across the face with a piece of fat pork.

An angry mix-up, school boy rules, followed, to the great detriment of the rations. Si and Shorty rushed up, separated the combatants, and administered shakes, cuffs, and sharp reprimands.

"Now, you quarrelsome little whelps," said Si, after quiet had been restored, "you've got to take them rations that you've spiled for yourselves. You shan't have no other. Put that bread and that meat you've kicked around into your own haversacks. Then go back there and roll up your blankets—same as the other boys. Alf Russell, you and Jim Humphreys come here and divide the rest o' these rations into seven parts, if you kin do it without fightin'."

The division of the rations proceeded, with some jars between Russell and Humphreys over the apportionment of fat and lean meat, and angry protests from little Pete Skidmore because they made his share smaller than anybody else's.

"Yit," said he, "I've got to march just as far as any of you, carry just as big a gun, and do just as much shootin'."

"You're wrong," said the medical-minded Alf Russell. "You ought to have less than the others, because you're smaller. The littler and younger the person the smaller the dose, always."

"No," acceded the farmer Jim Humphreys. "Tain't natural, nor right. You don't give a colt as much feed as you do a grown horse. Anybody knows that."

"Pete's plea is sound," contraverted the legal-minded Monty Scruggs. "All men are equal before the law, though they mayn't be a foot high. Rations

are a matter of law, and the law's no respecter of persons."

"Rations is intended," persisted Alf, "to give a man what he needs to eat—nothing more, nothing less. Pete don't need as much as a man; why give it to him? There'd be just as much sense in giving him the clothes for a six-footer."

"All o' you are always imposin' on me 'cause I'm little," whimpered Pete. "And that stuck-up Alf Russell's the worst of all. Just because he's goin' to be a doctor, and leads in singin' at church, he thinks he knows more'n the man what writ the arithmetic, and he's down on me because I won't take all he says for law and gospel, in spite of his airs. Jim Humphreys is down on me, because I writ home that I'd shot a man back there at the burnt bridge, and Jim got skeered at a coon-huntin' nigger."

"Never mind, Pete," said Monty consolingly, "none o' them shall impose on you while I'm around. Now, Alf, you and Jim give Pete just as much as the rest, or I'll make you."

"Who'll you make, you brindle steer?" said Alf, laying down his bread and bristling up.

"Stand back, Alf; he meant me," said Jim, disposing his meat, and approaching Monty with doubled fists. "Now, Mister Scruggs, le's see you do some makin', since you're so brash."

"Here, stop that, you little scamps," shouted Si, whose attention had been so far devoted to quieting Harry and Gid, and showing them how to prepare their traps for marching. "Great Scott, can't you git along without fightin'? I'm goin' to take you where you'll git real fightin' enough to satisfy you.

Go ahead, there, and divide them rations, as I ordered you, and be quick about it, for we must hurry off."

The mention of real fighting immediately sobered up the boys, and made them forget their squabbles. They hurried about their work with quickened zeal.

"Now," said Si, "pack your rations carefully in your haversacks, just as you see me and Corpril Elliott doin'. First, keep your sugar, coffee and salt separate. Put 'em in little tin boxes, like these, and see that the lids are on tight. Hurry up, now. Shorty, you'd better look over the boxes, and go up and draw as many cartridges as you think we'll need."

The mention of need for cartridges was an electric impulse which set the boys keenly alive. They bundled their rations into their haversacks, and flung their blanket rolls over their shoulders, and were standing in a state of palpitating expectancy, when Shorty came back with his hands full of cartridges, which he proceeded to distribute.

"Take arms," commanded Si. "Forward!—March!"

Si and Shorty started off with their long, easy campaign stride, which, in some incomprehensible way that the veteran only learns by practice, brought their feet down every time in exactly the right place, avoiding all stumbling-blocks, and covering without apparent effort a long distance in the course of an hour. The boys pattered industriously after, doing their best to keep up, but stumbling over roots and stones, and slipping on steep places, and dropping to the rear in spite of themselves.

When Si made the customary halt at the end of the

first hour, his little command was strung back for a quarter of a mile, and little Pete Skidmore was out of sight.

"Better go back and look for little Pete, Shorty," said Si. "We seem to be losin' him."

Pete was soon brought up, panting and tired.

"Dod darn it, what're you all runnin' away from me for?" he gasped. "Want to lose me? Want to git into the fight all by yourselves, and leave me out? Think because I'm little I can't help? I kin shoot as well as anybody in the crowd, dod darn you."

"There, you see the nonsense o' giving you as much rations as the others," suggested Alf Russell. "You can't pack 'em, and you wouldn't need 'em if you did pack 'em."

"What business is it of yours, Mister Russell, I'd like to know," asked Monty Scruggs, "what he does with his rations. His rations are his rights, and he's entitled to 'em. It's nobody's business what use a man makes of his rights."

"Where are these rebels that we're goin' to fight?" asked Harry Joslyn, eagerly scanning the horizon. "I've been looking for 'em all along, but couldn't see none. Was you in such a hurry for fear they'd get away, and have they got away?"

"I wasn't in no hurry," answered Si. "That was only regler marchin' gait."

"Holy smoke," murmured the rest, wiping their foreheads; "we thought you was trying to run the rebels down."

"Don't be discouraged, boys," said Si. "You'll soon git used to marchin' that way right along, and never thinking of it. It may seem a little hard now,

but it won't last long. I guess you're rested enough. Attention! Forward!—March!"

Si and Shorty had mercifully intended to slow down a little, and not push the boys. But as they pulled out they forgot themselves, and fell again into their long, swinging stride, that soon strung the boys out worse than ever, especially as they were not now buoyed up by an expectation of meeting the enemy.

"We must march slower, Si," said Shorty, glancing ruefully back, "or we'll lose every blamed one o' them boys. They're too green yit."

"That's so," accorded Si. "It's like tryin' to make a grass-bellied horse run a quarter-stretch."

"Might I inquire," asked Monty Scruggs, as he came up, wiped his face and sat down on a rock, "whether this is what you'd call a forced march, or merely a free-will trial trot for a record."

"Neither," answered Si. "It's only a common, straight, every-day march out into the country. You kin count upon one a day like this for the rest o' your natural lives—I mean your service. It's part o' what you enlisted for. And this's only a beginnin'. Some days you'll have to keep this up 15 or 18 hours at a stretch."

There was a general groan of dismay.

"Gracious, I wish I'd wings, or that I'd enlisted in the cavalry," sighed Harry.

"Brace up! Brace up!" said Shorty. "You'll soon git used to it, and make your 40 miles a day like the rest of us, carrying your bed-clothes and family groceries with you. It's all in gittin' used to it, as the man said who'd bin skinnin' eels for 40 years, and that now they didn't mind it a bit."

"Well, le's jog along," said Si. "We ought to git there in another hour. There's a big rain comin' up, and we want to git under cover before it strikes us. Forward!—March!"

But the rain was nearer that Si thought. It came, as the Spring rains come in the North Georgia mountains—as if Niagara had been shifted into the clouds overhead. The boys were literally washed off the road, and clung to saplings to avoid being carried away into the brush.

"I'll fall back and keep the boys together," said Shorty, as soon as an intermission allowed them to speak.

"Alright," said Si. "Look out for little Pete." And Si began to forge stolidly ahead.

"Goodness, Sarjint, you're not going to travel in such a storm as this," gasped Gid Mackall.

"Certainly," Si called back. "Come on. We've got to reach that mill tonight, no matter what happens. You'd might as well be drowned marchin' as standin' still. 'Tain't rainin' no worse further ahead than here. Forward!"

"Close up, boys," said Shorty, taking little Pete's gun and the youngster's hand. "This's only a Spring shower. 'Tain't nothin' to what we had on the Tullyhomy Campaign. There the drops was as big as punkins, and come as thick as the grains on a ear o' corn. Close up, there; dodge the big drops, and go ahead."

"Hold on to me tight! Hold on to me!" clamored little Pete. "If you don't I'll be washed away and lost for sure."

"Come along, Peter, my son," Shorty assured him.

"I hain't never lost no children yit, and I hain't goin' to begin with you."

The storm grew more violent every minute, limbs were torn from the trees, and fell with a crash, and



CLOSE UP, BOYS.

torrents rushed down from the mountain side, across the road. Si strode on resolutely, as if the disturbance were nothing more than a Summer zephyr. He waded squarely through the raging streams, turning at times to help the next boy to him, strode over the

fallen limbs, and took the dashing downpour with stolid indifference.

"Close up, boys! Close up!" shouted Shorty from time to time. "Don't mind a little sprinkle like this. It'll lay the dust, and make marchin' easier. Come along, Peter, my son. I'm not goin' to lose you."

Night suddenly came, with pitchy darkness, but Si steadily forged onward. Then the rain ceased as suddenly as it began, but the road was encumbered with fallen timber and swirling races of muddy water. They seemed more uncomfortable even than when the rain was falling. They were now nearing the mill, and the sound of a fitful musketry fire came to their ears.

"They've sneaked up in the storm to attack the mill," Si called out to Shorty. "Close up and prepare for action."

"Goodness," gasped Gid Mackall, much of whose vim had been soaked out of him by the fearful downpour, and who was oppressed by fatigue, hunger, and the dense blackness of the night in the strange woods. "You don't have to fight when you're wetter'n a drowned rat, and so tired you're ready to drop, do you?"

"That's what you do," said Shorty, wiping off his musket. "That's the way you'll have to do most o' your fightin'. The miserabler you feel the miserabler you want to make the other fellers feel. Boys, turn your guns upside down and let the water run out. Then half-cock 'em, and blow into 'em to clean the water out o' the tubes. Then find a dry rag somewhere about you, and wipe off the nipples. We want

every gun to go off when the order is given. Don't anybody load till Si gives the order."

The drenched but excited boys followed his directions with nervous haste. Shorty took one gun after another and examined it, while Si went forward a little ways to reconnoiter. The calm deliberation of the partners steadied the nervous boys.

"Load," called back Si, from the vantage ground of a little knoll, upon which he was standing, trying to see into the darkness beyond. A volley from out in front responded to the sound of his voice, and bullets knocked bark off the big chestnut behind which he had shrewdly taken refuge.

"Jest as I expected, Si," Shorty called back to him. "The rebels have throwed back a squad to watch for us."

"Yes," said Si, coolly, as he stepped back to meet the boys. "There ain't but 10 o' them, though. I counted every flash and located 'em. They're all in a bunch right over there by a dead tree to the left. Move up there quick, aim a little to the left. Aim low, and fire just as we reach the rise. I'll fire first, and the rest of you foller. Try to hit something, every one of you."

CHAPTER X.

THE BOYS HAVE A COUPLE OF LITTLE SKIRMISHES, BUT
FINALLY GET TO THE MILL.

THE time and the surroundings were such as to bring the spirits of the boys to their lowest ebb.

The gloomy, mysterious woods seemed a world's distance away from their homes, friends and assistance.

The long, tiresome tramp, the violent rainstorm, which had soaked them to their skins, and apparently found its way to their hearts; the muddy, slippery road, with torrents rushing across it, the splashing, searching rivulets from the boughs overhead, were all deeply depressing.

The boys huddled together, as if to gain courage by closer contact.

"Gracious, I never supposed they'd pull off a fight at night, when everybody was tired to death and soaked to a gruel," said Alf Russell in a shivery whisper.

"They fought at Hohenlinden at night, and on the snow," answered Monty Scruggs. "But snow's not so bad as rain, and, then, they didn't have these awful woods. I'd feel much better if we was out in a clearing somewhere."

"Come into line to the left, there," commanded Si, in a low tone. "Deploy, one pace apart. Shorty, take the left out there in the bushes. Don't make no noise, step carefully, and don't shoot till I do."

"Keep near me, Pete, and you won't git lost," said Shorty, as he stepped off into the brush.

"Must I shoot the same time you do, or wait till you shoot?" asked Pete, who seemed less depressed by his surroundings than the others, and mainly eager to get a chance to shoot.

"Don't watch me," cautioned Shorty. "Watch the fellers you are shootin' at, and try to hit 'em. Fire just as soon as you want to after you hear the others."

"I'll bet I'll hit a rebel if anybody does," said Pete with hopeful animation.

They tramped forward a few steps over the spongy ground, and through the dripping bushes.

The musketry fire continued fitfully around the mill in the distance.

They came to the summit of the little rise.

"Hist—halt; lay down, quick," called the watchful Si, in a penetrating voice. "They've loaded agin', and are about to shoot."

He and Shorty were down on their faces as he spoke. The others obeyed more slowly and clumsily. The rebel volley cut the limbs and bushes over their heads, and whistled viciously through the damp air and the darkness.

As little Pete dropped to the ground, his nervous finger touched the trigger and his gun went off up in the air. The others took this as a cue, and banged away as rapidly as they could get their muskets off.

Only Si and Shorty, in dropping, had kept the lay of the ground in view, and without rising they deliberately aimed their pieces whither the volley had

come and fired. A suppressed yell of pain came from the other side.

"We salted one of 'em, anyway," chuckled Shorty, as he raised on his knee to reload his gun.

"Gosh all Chrismus," said Si, using his most formidable swear-word, for he was very angry. "What was you brats shootin' at? Squirrels or angels? A rebel'd had to be 80 cubits high, like old Haman, for one o' you to've hit him. Lots o' good o' your packin' around guns and cartridges, if you're goin' to waste your ammynition on the malaria in the clouds. Load agin, now, carefully, and when you shoot agin be sure to fetch something. I'll take my ramrod to the next boy that I ketch shootin' higher'n a man's head. This ain't no Fourth-o'-July business. Our job's to kill them whangdoodles over there, and I want you to 'tend strictly to that."

The threat of a real boyish thrashing and the cool matter-of-fact way that Si and Shorty conducted themselves—precisely as if chopping trees or mowing a field—steadied the boys wonderfully.

"They're about ready to shoot agin," Si spoke down the line, in a penetrating whisper. "Everybody hug the ground, and watch the flashes. Each feller git a good line on the flash straight in front of him, and let the hound have a chunk o' lead just below his belt. If you're all real good, and shoot just right, I'll take you on a rush right at them fellers, and we'll scatter what's left like a flock o' quail. Lay low. There it comes agin. Lay low."

An irregular volley burnt out in the blackness beyond. The bullets sang around much closer than before, and several of them struck near Si, one land-

ing in the leaves and moss directly in front of him, and throwing a wet sprinkle in his face.

"Like the parrot, I was talkin' too much and too loud," thought Si. "They wuz all reachin' for me, and one feller made a mighty good line shot. Le's see if I can't better him."

He drew down in his sights as carefully as he could in the darkness, and pulled the trigger. As the smoke thinned out a little he thought he saw something beyond which indicated a man staggering and falling.

This time the boys seemed to be firing effectively. There was a commotion in the woods beyond, and the sound of groans on the damp air.

"Raise up!" shouted Si. "Forward! Forward! Jump 'em. Jump 'em before they kin load agin!"

Loading his gun with the practiced ease of a veteran as he rushed forward, Si led his squad directly against the position of the rebels. Part of the rebels had promptly run away, as they heard Si order the charge, but part boldly stood their ground, and were nervously reloading, or fixing bayonets, as the squad came crashing through the brush. One of the rebels fired a hasty, ineffectual shot, and by its light Shorty saw the nervous little Pete, who had torn off his cumbering haversack, letting his hat go with it, slip between him and Si, and gain a pace in advance.

"Git back, you little rat," said Shorty, reaching out a long arm, catching the boy by the collar, and yanking him back. "Git behind me and stay there."

The flash revealed another rebel fumbling for a cap. Shorty's gun came down, and the rebel fell, shot through the shoulder. The rebel leader, a long-

haired, lathy man, with the quickness of a wildcat, sprang at Si with his bayonet fixed. Heavy-footed and deliberate as Si usually was, when the electricity of a fight was in him there was no lack of celerity. He caught the rebel's bayonet on his musket-barrel and warded it off so completely that the rebel shot by him in the impetus of his own rush. As he passed Si delivered a stunning blow on the back of his head with his gun-barrel.

"That zouave drill was a mighty good thing, after all," thought Si, as he turned from his prostrate foe to the others.

While this was going on, the boys were imitating Shorty's example, getting their guns loaded, and banging away as fast as they did so into the rebels, who went down under the shots, or ran off, leaving one of their number, a tall, lank mountaineer, who seemed beside himself with rage. He had grasped his empty gun by the stock, and was swinging it around his head, yelling fierce insults and defiance to the whole race o' Yankees.

"Come on, you infernal pack o' white-livered, nigger-stealin', house-robbin', hell-desarvin' hypocrites," he shouted. "I kin lick the hull bilin' o' yo'uns. This is my wounded pardner here, and yo'uns can't have neither me nor him till yo'uns down me, which y' can't do. Come on, y' pigeon-livered cowards."

The boys who had pressed up near him, shrank back a little, out of possible range of that violently brandished musket, and began loading their guns.

Shorty had stopped for an instant to turn over into an easier position the rebel he had shot.

Si paced up. His gun was loaded, and he could have easily brought the rebel down. But the rebel's devotion to his partner touched him.



DON'T ANYBODY SHOOT.

"Don't shoot, boys," he commanded; "leave me to 'tend to him. Say, Johnny," he addressed the rebel, in a placatory way, "don't make a fool o' yourself. Come down, we've got you, dead. Drop that gun."

"Go to brimstone blazes," shouted the rebel. "If yo'uns have got me, why don't y' take me. I kin lick the hull caboodle o' y' sneakin' mulatters. Come on, why don't y'?"

"Give him a wad, Si," said Shorty, reloading his own gun. "We haint no time to lose. They need us over there."

"No, don't anybody shoot," commanded Si; "he's just crazy about his partner. He's too brave a man to kill. Say, Johnny, have a little sense. We haint goin' to hurt your partner, nor you, if you'll behave. Drop that gun at once, and surrender."

"Go to blazes," retorted the rebel, swinging his gun more wildly than ever. "Yo'uns is all liars. No dependence kin be placed on y'. If y' want me, come and git me."

Shorty had begun to think the thing somewhat humorous. "Look here, Johnny," said he, "wouldn't you like a big chaw o' navy terbacker—bright plug? Genuine Yankee plug? Swingin' that ere gun that way is awful tiresome."

"Eh—What's that?" said the rebel, startled by the new proposition and its coolness.

"I say, don't you want a big chaw o' terbacker? You must need it. I always do after I've bin workin' hard. Drop your gun, and have one with me. We're Injiannians, and we don't mean no harm to your partner, nor to you. We'll take care o' him, if he's hurt. Here, cut your own chaw."

"Air yo'uns from Injianny?" said the rebel, bringing his gun down to a less menacing attitude. "I've done got two brothers in Injianny, and I hear they'-

uns 've done inlisted in Yankee rijiments. Mebbe yo'uns know 'em."

"Mebbe we do," said Shorty, handing him a long plug and his knife. "But we hain't time to talk it over now. We'll do that in the mornin', when business ain't so pressin'. Le' me hold your gun while you cut your terbacker."

"Now, look here," said Si, "time's jumpin', and we must talk quick. If we parole you, will you stay here, and take care o' your partner and the others, and be here in the mornin', when we send for you?"

"You won't send for me, if yo'uns is a-gwine on ter fout we'uns up at the mill. We'uns chaw yo'uns up, or run y' outen the country."

"We'll take care o' that," said Si sharply. "Will you promise on your honor to stay with these men, and take care o' them till daylight, if we don't come sooner?"

"Sartin,—'pon honor," answered the rebel, with his mouth full of tobacco.

"All right, then. Load at will. Load! Forward!—March!" commanded Si.

Si moved on cautiously, for he feared that the run-aways had told those attacking the mill about his advance, and would bring them all down upon him. The dying down of the firing about the mill confirmed this opinion. He warned his boys to make as little noise as possible, and went ahead of them some distance, to reconnoiter, slipping along the side of the road, under the shadow of the trees. He arranged a system of signals with Shorty, by which one click of his gunlock meant halt, and two to come ahead. Presently he came in sight of the broad race

which ran to the mill. The starlight was sufficient to show its width and its banks, with the logs lying along, which had been cut when it was dug. A bridge crossed the race for the road to the mill. Beyond the ground rose sharply, and looking at the crest against the sky, he could see the rebels, one by one, file over, and come down to where they could crouch behind the logs and ambuscade the bridge.

Si clicked his gunlock, and waited till he had counted 25 rebels gathered there, which seemed to be all, as no more appeared. Then he slipped back to Shorty, and hurriedly explained the situation.

The boys listened with sinking hearts. More than three times as many rebels as they themselves numbered, and perhaps fiercer and stronger than those they had already encountered.

The elation of their recent victory subsided. Again the woods became ominously dark and gloomy, the soaking dampness very depressing. They huddled together to brace each other up.

"Si," said Shorty, "didn't you say that it was a squad o' the Maumee Muskrats in the mill, and that we wuz goin' to relieve 'em."

"Yes, and the Orderly said that railroad 'Mick'—Hennessey—was the Sarjint in command."

"O, that bog-trottin' old section boss, that hairy-handed artist with the long shovel, is there, is he with his crucifix and his prayers to the Saints. That's all right. He's bin stormin' and swearin' ever since the fight begun, because he's bin obliged to stay inside and shoot, and instid of making a grand rush and settling things, according to Donnybrook Fair rules. I tell you what you do. You work

the boys carefully down through the brush toward the race, and git 'em into position in easy range of the rebels, covering 'em behind logs. I'll take a circuit around to the left, and git over to the hill, behind the rebels, and near enough the mill for Hennessey to hear me. Then I'll fire a shot and yell for Hennessey. He knows my voice, and he'll bring his men out like a pack o' hornets. Then you let into the rebels from your side. They can't git across the race at you, and we'll have 'em where we kin whip-saw 'em."

"Shorty," said Si admiringly, "Gen. Grant 'll hear o' you some day, and then Co. Q will lose its brightest star, but the army'll gain a great General."

"I know it; I know it," said Shorty, modestly; "but don't stop to talk about it now. I think I've got the lay o' the mill in mind. I'll just cut around that way. Don't shoot till you hear me."

Si quietly deployed his boys to the left of the road, and worked them through the brush until they came to the crest overlooking the mill-race. They took readily to this sort of work. They had all hunted rabbits over the hills of southern Indiana, and they came into position so softly that the rebels beyond did not suspect their presence.

Then came a long wait for the signal from Shorty. The rebels seemed to get tired first. Presently they could be seen moving around, and Si had hard work restraining his squad from shooting at the tempting marks. Then the rebels began talking, at first in murmurs, and then louder. There seemed to be a division of opinion among them. Those who had been run back were sure that the Yankee were

coming on to the relief of their comrades in the mill. The others thought that their comrades had run the other away just as fast.

"I tell you, hit's no use to wait for they'uns no longer," said one strong voice. "Them Yankees is runnin' back to their camps as fast as they'uns's legs 'll carry they'uns. If yo'uns 'd had any sand, and stood yer ground, you'd 'a seed 'em. But yo' yaller hammers allers git the ager when ever a cap's busted, and run yer rabbit-gizzards out."

"Y're a liar," hotly responded another voice. "Thar was more'n 50 o' them Yankees, if thar was a man. We fit 'em awful, before we give away, and they'd killed Burt Dolson and Bob Whittyker, and I don't know how many more. They come bulgin' right on toward the mill, arter they'd reformed. I know hit, bekase Eph and me staid and watched 'em, and shot at 'em, till we thought hit best to run back and warn ye."

"Ye wuz in a powerful hurry to warn us," sneered the other. "Well, thar's no Yankees over thar, and none haint a-comin' till daylight. I've ketched all the ager and rhematiz here that I'm a-gwine ter. Le's go back and salivate them fellers in the mill, and set fire to it."

This seemed to be the prevailing sentiment, and Si began to fear that they would all go, and might intercept Shorty. He was on the point of ordering the boys to fire, and attract their attention, when Shorty's rifle rang out, and the next instant came a roar from Shorty's powerful lungs, with each word clear and distinct:

"Hennessy — you — red — mouthed — Mick — come

out. The 200th Injianny is—here. Come out—with a rush—you—imported spalpeen—and jump—'em—in—the—rear!"

"Now, boys," commanded Si, "keep cool, pick your man, and fire low. I'm goin' to take the feller that's bin doin' the big talkin'."

Each of the boys had already picked his man, and was eagerly waiting the word. Their fire threw their enemies into confusion, and as their guns rattled, the barricaded doors of the mill were thrown open, and Hennessey rushed out with a wild Irish "hurroo." The rebels incontinently fled, without an attempt at resistance.

After it was ascertained that every unhurt rebel was running for dear life to get away, after Hennessey and his squad had gathered up the wounded and carried them into the mill, and after the boys had yelled themselves hoarse over their victory gained with such unexpected ease, they suddenly remembered that they were so tired that they could scarcely drag one foot after another, and hungrier than young wolves at the end of a hard Winter.

"Gewhillikins," murmured Jim Humphreys, "I wonder when we're going to have supper. I'm as holler as a stovepipe."

"You've got your suppers in your haversacks," said Si. "We'll go into the mill and build a fire and make some coffee and fry some meat."

"In my haversack," said Jim ruefully, after they had entered the mill, and he had run his hand into his forgotten haversack, and withdrawn it covered with a viscid greasy mush. "My haversack's full o' water, that's soaked everything else in it to a gruel."

"So's mine; so's mine," echoed the rest, as they examined.

"Confound it," said Si wrathfully, as he looked into one after another. "Didn't none o' you have sense enough to fasten down the covers carefully, so's to keep the water out? Here it is—salt and sugar and coffee, bread and greasy pork all in one nasty mess. I declare, you don't seem to have the sense you wuz born with. You've bin breakin' yourselves down luggin' around 10 or 15 pounds o' water, besides spilin' your rations."

"Probably Sarjint Hennessey has some rations that he kin give us," suggested Shorty, who was genuinely sorry for the poor boys.

"Dade I haint—not a smidgeon," answered Hennessey. "We ixpected ye's to git here this forenoon and relieve us, and we et up ivery spoonful of our grub for breakfast, so's to lighten us for a quick march back to camp. They've not bin runnin' in the mill for several days, and've carted off ivery bit of the male they ground. We're nigh starved oursilves, but we've had a lovely little foight, and we forgive ye's for not coming airlier. Oi wouldn't 've missed that last rush on thim divil's for a month's double rations."

"Well," said Si, encouragingly, "we'll have to make mine and Shorty's rations go around as well as they kin, among all of you. Fish the meat out o' your haversacks, boys, and wash the dope off it. It ain't spiled, anyway. We kin each of us have a little to eat tonight, and we'll trust to Providence for ter-morrer."

CHAPTER XI.

SHORTY GIVES THE BOYS THEIR FIRST LESSON IN FORAGING.

WITH the elasticity of youth the boys slept away their fatigue during the night, but woke up the next morning ravenously hungry.

"What in the world are we goin' to do for grub, Si?" asked Shorty, as soon as he got his eyes fairly open.

"Oi know fwhat Oi'm goin' to do," said Hennessey. "Oi'm goin' to show the foinest pace av shprinting back to camp that has been sane in these parts since our roight bruk that day at Chickamaugy. No grass'll grow under me fate, Oi tell yez. And as I pass through your camp Oi'll foind yer Captain, and tell the fix you're in, and to sind out some rations."

"But even if he does send them at once, they can't git here till evenin', and I hate powerfully to let him and the rest know that we didn't have sense enough to take care o' our victuals after we'd drawed 'em," said Si.

"If it was only one, or even two days, I'd let the boys starve it out, as a good lesson to 'em," said Shorty. "But three seems like cruelty to dumb beasts."

"But what'll they say about us in camp?" groaned Si. "They'll have the grand laugh on me and you, and every one o' the boys. I'd ruther go on quarter rations for a month than stand the riggin' they'll give us, and have Capt. McGillicuddy give me one look when he asks the question about how we come to lose all our rations so soon? He'll think me a purty Sarjint to send out into the country in charge o' men, and you a fine Corpril."

"Say," said Shorty, his face illuminated with a bright idea. "We might report the rations 'lost in action.' That'd fix it fine. We had two good fights, and come out ahead. That'll tickle the Captain so that he won't be partickler what we report."

"Hurroo!" echoed Hennessey; "that's the ticket."

"But we didn't lose 'em in action, and to say so'd be a lie," answered Si, whose conscience had none of the easy elasticity of his partner's. "We could report 'em burnt up by lightnin', but we won't. They was lost by sheer, dumbd carelessness, that me and you and the boys should knowed better than to've allowed. That's all there is of it, and that's what I'm goin' to report, if I have to."

"Great Jehosephat," exploded Shorty; "you kin certainly be the stubbornest mule over nothin', Si Klegg, that I ever seen. We've done fightin' enough to excuse sich a report, or any that we've a mind to make."

"Nothin' kin justify a lie," persisted the obdurate Si.

"Holy smoke! bigger men than you—lots bigger—have squared up their accounts that way. Didn't all the Captains in the rijiment, and the Quartermaster

and Commissary, and, for what I know, the Chaplain and the Colonel, git clean bills o' health after the battle o' Stone River, by reportin' everything that they couldn't find 'lost in action?' "

"Yis," added Hennessey, "and didn't my Captain, after Chickamaugy, git us all new uniforms and complete kits, by reportin' iverything 'lost in action?' Smart man, my Captain, Oi tell yez."

"Well, I don't think any the more o' them for it. We spiled our rations before the fightin' begun, they'd bin spiled if there'd bin no fightin', and I haint going to send no other words, if I've got to send any word."

"Who the divil's goin' to carry this word, Oi'd like to know, Misther Klegg?" broke in Hennessey. "Are you goin' to put words into my mouth, Misther Klegg? Oi'll tell your Captain just fwhat Oi plaze, about you and your foight and your rations. Oi want no more worrids wid ye. Attintion, min! Shoulder, a-r-m-s! Roight face! Forward, foile left!—M-a-r-c-h!"

"I s'pose I ain't responsible for any o' the fairy tales with which that wild Mick'll fill up the Captain," said Si, self-consolingly, as Hennessey and his squad marched away in quick time. "He'll put a rich, red, County Connaught color on everything that's happened out here, and the Captain'll believe as much as suits him. Anyhow, Hennessey'll not say anything to our disadvantage, and probably the Captain'll send out some rations by fast mule express."

"Yes," accorded Shorty; "we'll git some rations from camp by this evenin'. Cap will look out for

that. Meanwhile, I'll take out two or three o' the boys on a scout into the country, to see if we can't pick up something to eat."

"Humph," said Si, skeptically, "you'll find mighty poor pickin', after them Ohio boys 's bin out here three days. What they haint taken has been rooted in the ground."

"Yes; they're awful foragers and thieves," assented Shorty. "All Ohio boys is. I'm glad I'm from Injianny. Still, I've generally bin able to find something, even after the Ohio boys had bin there."

"Well, I think we'd better first go back and see about them rebels that we wounded last night. They may be sufferin' awfully, and we oughtn't to think about something to eat, before doin' what we kin for them."

"That's so," assented Shorty. "I'd a-gone back last night, but we was all so dead tired."

"Well, I'll take two o' the boys and go back. You stay here with the rest, and hold the mill. I'll git back as soon's I kin, and then you kin take a couple o' the boys and go out foragin'."

Calling Alf Russell and Monty Scruggs to follow him, Si started back to the scene of the skirmish of the night before. The woods looked totally different, under the bright Spring sunshine, from what they had seemed in the chill, wet blackness of the previous night. Buds were bursting and birds singing, and all nature seemed very blithe and inspiring.

"Gracious, what a difference daylight makes in the woods," murmured Monty Scruggs. "Tain't a bit like Hohenlinden."

“ ’Tis morn, but scarce yon lurid sun
Can pierce the war-clouds rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout ’mid their sulphurous canopy.”

“You’d think, from the way the bird ’s singing, and the flowers blooming, that there’d never been a gun fired within a hundred miles o’ here.”

“Seems like we only dreamed all that happened last night,” accorded Alf Russell. “There’s nothing in the woods or the ground that looks as it did then, and I can’t hardly make myself believe that this is the way we come.”

“Well, here’s something that’ll convince you it wasn’t a dream,” said Si, as they made their way through the broken and trampled brush, and came to a little knoll, on which the final fight had been made, and where were gathered the wounded rebels. There were three of these; the man whom Shorty had shot in the shoulder, the one whom Si knocked down by a stunning blow on the head, and the one who had been hit in the thigh by a shot from the boys, and who was the “pardner” of the recalcitrant man of the previous evening. He was still there, caring for his comrades. The men who had been shot were so faint from loss of blood that they could scarcely move, and the man whom Si had struck was only slowly recovering consciousness.

The unhurt rebel was standing there with his gun in hand, and had apparently been watching their approach for some time.

“My parole was out at daylight,” he said, as they came up. “The sun’s now nearly an hour high. I

ain't obleeged to be good no more, and I could've drapped one o' yo'uns when y' fust turned offen the road, and got away. I s'pose I'd orter've done hit, and I'd a great mind ter, but suthin' sorter held me back. Onderstand that?"

"You'd a' bin a nice man to've shot at us when we wuz comin' to help your comrades," said Si, walking up coolly toward him, and getting near enough to prevent his leveling his gun, while he held his own ready for a quick blow with the barrel. "We needn't've come back here at all, except that we felt it right to take care o' the men that got hurt."

"Come back to take keer o' the men that yo'uns swatted last night?" said the rebel incredulously. "That haint natural. 'Taint Yankee-like. What'd yo'uns keer for 'em, 'cept to see if they'uns's dead yit, and mebbe gin 'em a prod with the bayonit to help 'em along? But they'uns's mouty nigh dead, now. They'uns can't last much longer. But I'll kill the fust one o' yo'uns that tries to prod one o' they'uns with a bayonit. Let they'uns alone. They'll soon be gone."

"What're you talkin' about, you dumbled fool?" said Si, irritably. "We haint no Injuns nor heathens, to kill wounded men. We're Injiannians and Christians, what read the Bible, and foller what it says about lovin' your enemies, and carin' for them what despitefully use you—that is, after you've downed 'em good and hard."

"Does your Bible say that ere?" asked the rebel.

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, hit must be a new-fangled kind of a Yankee Bible. The only Bible I ever seed was a piece o' one

that used t' be in dad's house, and I've done heard strangers read hit aloud hundreds o' times, and hit said nothin' like that. Hit had lots in it 'bout killin' every man and man-child, and hewin' 'em to pieces afore the Lord, but nothin' 'bout lovin' and takin' keer o' them that wuz fernest ye."

"Well, it's in there, all the same," said Si impatiently, "and you must mind it, same's we do. Come, drop that gun, and help us take care o' these men. They ain't goin' to die. We won't let 'em. They're all right. Just faint from loss o' blood. We kin fix 'em up. Set your gun agin' that beech there, and go to the branch and git some water to wash their wounds, and we'll bring 'em around all right."

There was something so masterful in Si's way, that the rebel obeyed. Si set his own gun down against a hickory, in easy reach, and had the boys do the same. He had naturally gained a good deal of knowledge of rough surgery in the army, and he proceeded to put it to use. He washed the wounds, stayed the flow of blood, and to take the rising fever out of the hurts, he bound on them fresh, green dock-leaves, wet with water. After the man he had struck had had his face washed, and his head thoroughly doused with cold water, he recovered rapidly and was soon able to sit up, and then rise weakly to his feet.

The rebel looked on wonderingly.

"Well, yo'uns is as good doctrin' hurts as ole Sary Whittleton, and she's a natural bone-setter," he said.

"Well, don't stand around and gawk," said Si snappishly. "Help. What's your name?"

"Gabe Brimster."

"Well, Gabe, go down to the branch and git some more water, quick as you kin move them stumps o' your'n. Give the men all they want to drink, and then pour some on their wounds. Then go there and cut some o' them pawpaws, and peel their bark, to make a litter to carry your pardner back to the mill. Boys, look around for guns. Smash all you kin find on that rock there, so they won't be of no more use. Bust the locks good, and bend the barrels. Save two to make the handles of the litter."

Si proceeded to deftly construct a litter out of the two guns, with some sticks that he cut with a knife, and bound with pawpaw strips.

A few days before, Si, while passing near the hospital, saw a weak convalescent faint and fall. He rushed to the Surgeon's tent, and that officer being busy, handed him a small bottle with a metal top, and filled with strong ammonia, telling him to unscrew the top and hold the bottle under the man's nose. He did so, with the effect of reviving him. Si thrust the bottle into his pocket, to help the man back to the hospital, and forgot all about it, until one after another of his present patients overdid himself, had a relapse, and fainted away. Si happened to feel his bottle, drew it out, unscrewed the top, thrust it under their noses, and revived them.

Gabe's eyes opened wider at each performance. He had never seen a bottle with a metal top, or one that unscrewed, or anything that seemed to effect such wonderful changes by merely pointing it at a man. His mountaineer intellect, prone to "spells" and "charms," saw in it at once an instrument of mortal witchcraft. With a paling face, he began edging

toward his gun. Busy as Si had been, he had kept constantly in mind the possibility of Gabe's attempting some mischief, and did not let himself lose sight of the rebel's gun. He quickly rose, and with a few strides, placed himself between Gabe and his gun.



“MR. YANK, DON'T CONJURE ME.”

“Where are you goin'?” he said sternly.

“I'm a-gwine away,” replied the man, in terror-stricken accents. “I'm a-gwine away mouty quick. I don't want to stay here no longer.”

"Indeed you're not goin' away. You'll stay right with us, and help us take care o' your comrades."

"I'm a-gwine away, I tell y'," shrieked Gabe. "I'm gwine right away. I'm skeered o' yo'uns. Yo'uns is no doctor, nor no sojer. Yo'uns is a conjure-man, and a Yankee conjure-man, too—wust kind. Yo'uns 've bin puttin' spells on them men, and yo'uns'll put a spell on me. I've felt hit from the fust. I'm a-gwine away. Le'me go, quick."

Si caught the man roughly by the shoulder with his left hand, and raised his right threateningly. It still had the bottle in it. "You're not goin' a step, except with us," he said. "Go back there, and 'tend to your business as I told you, or I'll break you in two."

The sight of the dreadful bottle pointed at him completely unnerved the rebel. He fell on his knees.

"O, Mister Yank—Mister Conjure-man! don't put no spell on me. Pray to God, don't! I had one on me wunst, when I was little, and liked to've died from hit. I haint no real rebel. I wuz conscripted into the army, or I wouldn't be foutin' yo'uns. I won't fout no more, if yo'uns'll not put a spell on me. 'Deed I won't! I swar to God I wont!"

And he raised his right hand in testimony.

"Put a spell on you? Conjure you? What dumbbed nonsense!" ejaculated Si, and then his eyes caught the rebel's fastened on the bottle in his hand, and a gleam of the meaning entered his mind. He had no conception of the dread the mountaineers have of being "conjured," but he saw that something about the bottle was operating terrifically on the rebel's mind and took advantage of it. He was in too much

of a hurry to inquire critically what it was, but said: "Well, I won't do nothin' to you, so long's you're good, but mind that you're mighty good, and do just as I say, or I'll fix you. Git up, now, and take hold o' your pardner's feet, and help me lift him on the litter. Then you take hold o' the front handles. Monty, throw your gun-sling over your shoulder, and take hold o' the rear handles. The two o' you carry this man back. Alf, throw your gun-sling over your shoulder, put your arm under this man's, and help him along. I'll help this man."

They slowly made their way back toward the mill. As they came on the crest of the last rise, they saw Shorty and the rest eagerly watching for them. Shorty and the others ran forward and helped them bring the men in. Shorty was particularly helpful to the man he had shot. He almost carried him in to the mill, handling him as tenderly as if a child, fixed a comfortable place for him on the floor with his own blankets, and took the last grains of his coffee to make him a cup. This done, he said:

"I'm goin' out into the country to try and find some chickens to make some broth for you men. Come along, Harry Joslyn, Gid Mackall and little Pete."

The country roundabout was discouragingly poor, and had been thoroughly foraged over. But Shorty had a scent for cabins that were hidden away from the common roads, and so escaped the visitations of ordinary foragers. These were always miserably poor, but generally had a half-dozen chickens running about, and a small store of cornmeal and side-meat. Ordinarily he would have passed one of these

in scorn, because to take any of their little store would starve the brood of unkempt children that always abounded. But now, they were his hope. He had been playing poker recently with his usual success, and as the bets were in Confederate money, he had accumulated quite a wad of promises to "Pay in gold, six months after the ratification of a Treaty of Peace between the Confederate States and the United States." He would make some mountaineer family supremely happy by giving them more money than they had ever seen in their lives, in exchange for their stock of meal, chickens and sidemeat. They would know where to get more, and so the transaction would be a pleasant one all around.

In the meanwhile, little Pete had visions of killing big game in the mountain woods. The interminable forest suggested to him dreams of bear, deer, buffalo, elk, and all the animals he had read about. It would be a great thing to bring down an elk or a deer with his Springfield rifle, and then be escorted back to camp in triumph, with the other boys carrying his game. He kept circling through the woods, in sight or hearing of the others, expecting every minute to come upon some animal that would fill his youthful sanguine hopes.

Shorty at last found a poor little cabin such as he had been looking for. It was hidden away in a little cove, and had never been visited by the men of either army. It had the usual occupants—a weak-eyed, ague-smitten man, who was so physically worthless that even the rebel conscripters rejected him; a tall, gaunt woman, with a vicious shrillness in her voice and a pipe in her mouth; a half score of mangy yel-

low dogs, and an equal number of wild, long-haired, staring children. They had a little "jag" of meal in a bag, a piece of sidemeat, and a half-dozen chickens. The man had that morning shot an opossum, lean from its Winter fasting. Shorty rejected this contemptuously.

"I've bin mighty hungry in my time," said he, "but I never got quite so low down as to eat anything with a tail like a rat. That'd turn my stummick if I was famishin'."

The man looked on Shorty's display of wealth with lack-luster eyes, but his wife was fascinated, and quickly closed up a deal which conveyed to Shorty all the food that they had. Just as Shorty had completed payment, there came a shot from little Pete's rifle, and the next instant that youth appeared at the edge of the cornpatch extending up hill from the cabin, hatless, and yelling at the top of his voice. Shorty and the others picked up their guns and took position behind the trees.

"What's the matter, Pete?" asked Shorty, as the boy came up, breathless from his long run. "Rebels out there?"

"No," gasped Pete. "I was hunting out there for a deer, or a elk, or a bear, when suddenly I come acrost the queerest kind of an animal. It looked more like a hog than anything else, yet it wasn't a hog, for it was thinner'n a cat. It had long white tusks, longer'n your hand, that curled up from its mouth, little eyes that flashed fire, and great long bristles on his back, that stood straight up. I shot at it and missed it, and then it run straight at me. I made for the fence as hard as I could, but it outrun me and

was gaining on me every jump. Just as I clim the fence it a-most ketched me, and made a nip not six inches from my leg. I could hear him gnash them awful tusks o' his'n."

"Humph," said the woman. "He's run acrost Stevenson's old boar, that runs in them woods up thar, and is mouty savage this time o' year. He'd take a laig offen a youngster quicker'n scat, if he ketched him. He done well to run."

Shorty and the others walked up to the fence and looked over. There was the old razor-back King of the woods still raging around sniffing the air of combat.

"Why, it's only a hog, Pete!" said Shorty.

"Only a hog!" murmured Pete with shamed heart.

"That a hog?" echoed the others. "Well, that's the queerest looking hog I ever saw."

"It's a hog all the same," Shorty assured them. "A genuine razor-back hog. But he's got the secession devil in him like the people, and you want to be careful of him. He ain't fit to eat or I'd kill him. Let's git back to the mill."

CHAPTER XII.

THE OPENING OF THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN.

WHAT an ineffably imposing spectacle of military power was presented to the May sun, shining on the picturesque mountains and lovely valleys around Chattanooga in the busy days of the Spring of 1864.

Never before, in all his countless millions of journeys around the globe, had he seen a human force of such tremendous aggressive power concentrated on such a narrow space. He may have seen larger armies—though not many—but he had never seen 100,000 such veterans as those—originally of as fine raw material as ever gathered under a banner, and trained to war by nearly three years of as arduous schooling as men ever knew, which sifted out the weaklings, the incompetents, the feeble-willed by the boisterous winnowing of bitter war.

Thither had been gathered 35,000 of the Army of the Tennessee, who had "Fort Donelson," "Shiloh," "Corinth," "Chickasaw Bayou," "Big Black," "Jackson," and "Vicksburg" in letters of gold on their tattered regimental banners, and whom Sherman proudly boasted were "the best soldiers on earth." The courtly, idolized McPherson was their leader, with such men as John A. Logan, T. E. G. Ransom,

Frank P. Blair and P. J. Osterhaus as lieutenants and subordinates.

There was the Army of the Cumberland, 60,000 strong, from which all dross had been burned by the fierce fires of Shiloh, Perryville, Stone River and Chickamauga, and the campaigns across two States. "The noblest Roman of them all," grand old "Pap" Thomas, was in command, with Howard, Stanley, Newton, Wood, Palmer, Davis, Joe Hooker, Williams and Geary as his principal lieutenants.

And thither came—15,000 strong—all of the Army of the Ohio who could be spared from garrisoning dearly-won Kentucky and East Tennessee. They were men who had become inured to hunting their enemies down in mountain fastnesses, and fighting them wherever they could be found. At their head was Gen. J. M. Schofield, whom the Nation had come to know from his administration of the troublous State of Missouri. Gens. Hovey, Hascall and Cox were division commanders.

With what an air of conscious power; of evident mastery of all that might confront them; of calm, unflinching determination for the conflict, those men moved and acted. They felt themselves part of a mighty machine, that had its work before it, and would move with resistless force to perform the appointed task.

The men fell instinctively into their ranks in the companies. Without an apparent effort the companies became regiments, the regiments quietly, but with swift certainty, swung into their places in the brigade, and the brigades massed up noiselessly into divisions and corps.

And while the 100,000 veterans were drilling, organizing and manuvering the railroad was straining every one of its iron and steel tendons to bring in food and ammunition to supply the mighty host, and provide a store from which it could draw when it went forth upon its great errand. There were 35,000 horses to be fed, in addition to the 100,000 veterans, and so the baled hay made heaps that rivalled in size the foothills of the mountains. The limitless cornfields of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois heaped up their golden harvests in other hillocks. Every mountain pass was filled with interminable droves of slow-footed cattle, bringing forward "army beef on the hoof." Boxes of ammunition and crackers, and barrels of pork covered acres, and the railroad brought them in faster than the hundreds of regimental teams could haul them out.

There is no place in the world where the assembling of such a mighty host could be seen to such an advantage as at Chattanooga. The mountains that tower straight up into the clouds around the undulating plain on which the town stands form a glorious natural amphitheater about an arena for gigantic dramas.

Naturally, the boys were big-eyed all the time with the sights that filled the landscape near and far. Wherever they looked they were astonished, and when in a march they came out on a crest that commanded a wide view, they could not help halting, to drink all its wonders in. Even the experienced Si and Shorty were as full of amazement as they, and watched with fascination the spectacle of mighty preparation and concentrated power.

One day they got a pass and took the boys over to Lookout Mountain, for a comprehensive survey of the whole scene. They trudged over the steep, rough, winding road up the mountainside, and made their way to Pulpit Rock, on the "nose" of the mountain, which commands a view that is hardly equalled in any country. From it they overlooked, as upon a map, the wide plain around Chattanooga, teeming with soldiers and horses, and piled-up war material, the towering line of Mission Ridge, the fort-crowned hills, the endless square miles of white camps.

“ ‘The King sat on the rocky brow
That looks o’er sea-born Salamis,
And ships by thousands lay below,
And men and Nations, all were his,’

murmured Monty Scruggs. “I didn’t suppose there was as many soldiers in all the world before.”

“Si,” said Shorty, “we thought old Rosecrans had heaped up the measure when we started out from Nashville for Stone River. But that was only the beginning for the gang he got together for the Tullyhomy campaign, and ’taint more than onct to what old Sherman’s goin’ to begin business with. I like it. I like to see any man start into a game with a full hand and a big stack o’ chips.”

“Well, from the talk that comes down from headquarters,” said Si, “he may need every man. We’ve never had enough men so far. The rebels have always had more men than we did, and had the advantage of position. We only won by main strength and bull-headedness, and Rosecrans’s good management. The rebels are straining every nerve

to put up the fight o' their lives, and they say old Jo Johnston's got nearly as many men over there at Buzzard Roost as we have, and works that beat them we hustled Bragg out of around Tullyhomy."

"Well, let's have it as soon as possible," said Shorty. "I'm anxious to see if we can't make another Mission Ridge over there at Buzzard Roost, and run them fellers clean back to the Gulf of Mexico. But, great Jehosephat, won't there be a Spring freshet when all them men and horses and cattle break camp and start out over the country."

"Goodness, what kin I do to keep from gitting lost in all that crowd?" wailed Pete Skidmore, and the others looked as if his fears also struck their hearts.

"Just stick closs to the 200th Injianny and to me, and you won't git lost, Pete," said Shorty. "The 200th Injianny's your home, and all real nice boys stay around home."

They made a little fire on the broad, flat surface of Pulpit Rock, boiled some coffee, and ate their dinner there, that they might watch the wonderful panorama without interruption. As the afternoon advanced, they saw an unusual commotion in the camps, and the sound of enthusiastic cheering floated faintly up to their lofty perch.

"I'll bet a big red apple orders to move has come," said Si. "Le's git back to camp as quick as possible."

They hurried down the mountain-side, and turned sharply to the right into the road to Rossville Gap.

"Yes, the orders to move has come," said Shorty. "See them big fires, and the boys burnin' up things."

In every camp the cheering men were making

bonfires of the furnishings of their Winter camps. Chairs, benches, tables, checker-boards, cupboards, what-nots, etc., which had cost them considerable pains to procure, and upon which they had lavished no little mechanical skill, and sometimes artistic ornamentation, were ruthlessly thrown to feed the joyful fires which blazed in each camp which had been lucky enough to receive orders. The bands were playing, to emphasize and give utterance to the rejoicings of the men.

Shorty took little Pete by the hand to assist him in keeping up with the rapid pace Si and he set up to get back to their own camp, and participate in its demonstrations.

"Of course, our rijimint's goin' too—goin' to have the advance," Si said to Shorty, more than anything else to quiet a little disturbing fear that would creep in. "They wouldn't leave it behind to guard one o' these mud-piles they call forts, would they?"

"They never have yit," answered Shorty, hopefully. "They say old Sherman is as smart as they make 'em. He knows a good rijimint when he sees it, and he's certain to want the 200th Injianny in the very foremost place. Hustle along, boys."

As they neared their camp they were delighted to find it in a similar uproar to the others, with the men cheering, the brigade band playing, and the men throwing everything they could find on the brightly blazing bonfires. Ordinarily, such a long march as they had made to the top of the Lookout Mountain and back again would have been very tiresome, but in the enthusiasm of the occasion they forgot their fatigue—almost forgot their hunger.

"The orders are," the Orderly-Sergeant explained to Si, as they were cooking supper, "that we're to move out tomorrow morning in light marching order, three days' rations, 80 rounds of cartridges, only blankets, no tents, but one wagon to a regiment, and one mule to a company to carry ammunition and rations. O, we're stripped down to the skin for a fight, I tell you. It's to be business from the first jump, and we'll be right in it. We're to have the advance, and clear away the rebel cavalry and pickets, to open up the road for the rest of the division. You'll find your rations and ammunition in front of my tent. Draw 'em and get everything ready, and go to sleep as soon as possible, for we'll skin out of here at the first peep of day. There's a whole passel of sassy rebel cavalry out in front, that's been entirely too familiar and free, and we want to get a good whack at them before they know what's up.

And the busy Orderly passed on to superintend other preparations in the company.

After drawing and dividing the rations and cartridges, Si gave the boys the necessary instruction about having their things ready so that they could get them in the dark the next morning, and ordered them to disregard the bonfires and mirth-making, and lie down to get all the sleep they could, in preparation for the hard work of the next day. Then, like the rest of the experienced men, who saw that the campaign was at length really on, and this would be the last opportunity for an indefinite while to write, he sat down to write short letters to his mother and to Annabel.

Influenced by the example, Shorty thought he ought to write to Maria. He had received a second letter from her the day that he had gone out to the mill, and its words had filled his soul with a gladness that passed speech. The dispassionate reader would not have seen anything in it to justify this. He would have found it very commonplace, and full of errors of spelling and of grammar. But Shorty saw none of these. Shakspeare could have written nothing so divinely perfect to him. He had not replied to it sooner, because he had been industriously thinking of fitting things to say in reply. Now he must answer at once, or postpone it indefinitely, and that meant so much longer in hearing again from her. He got out his stationery, his gold pen, his wooden inkstand, secured a piece of a cracker box for a desk, and seated himself far from Si as possible among the men who were writing by the light of the pitch-pine in the bonfires. Then he pulled from his breast the silk bandana, and carefully developed from its folds the pocket-book and Maria's last letter, which he spread out and re-read several times.

Commonplace and formal as the letter was, there was an intangible something in it that made him feel a little nearer the writer than ever before. Therefor, he began his reply:

Dere Miss Maria Klegg:

"I taik mi pen in hand to inform you that our walkin'-papers has at last come, and we start terrormorrer mornin' for Buzzard Roost to settle jest whose to rool that roost. Our ideas and Mister Jo

Johnston's differ on that subjeck. When we git through with him hele no more, though he probably won't be so purty as he is now."



LITTLE PETE'S "AWFUL REBELS."

He stopped to rest after this prodigious literary effort, and wipe the beaded sweat from his brow. He saw little Pete Skidmore looking at him with troubled face.

"What're you doin' up, Pete? Lay down and go to sleep."

"Say, Corpril, the Orderly said we wuz goin' to fight a whole passel of rebel cavalry, didn't he?"

"Um-hum!" assented Shorty, cudgeling his brain as to what he should next write.

"Them's them awful kind o' rebels, ain't they—the John Morgan kind—that ride big horses that snort fire, and they have long swords, with which they chop men's heads off?"

"A lot o' yellin', gallopin' riff-raff," said Shorty, with the usual contempt of an infantryman for cavalry. "Ain't worth the fodder their hosses eat."

"Ain't they terribler than any other kind o' rebels?" asked Pete, anxiously.

"Naah," said Shorty, sharply. "Go to sleep, Pete, and don't bother me with no more questions. 'I'm writin' a letter.'" He proceeded with his literary effort:

"I was gladder than I kin tell you to git yore letter. You do write the best letters of any woman in the whole world"——

He looked up, and there was little Pete's face before him.

"What do you do when one o' them wild rebels comes cavorting and tearing toward you, on a big hoss, with a long sword, and yelling like a cata-mount?" he asked.

"Paste him with a bullet and settle him," said Shorty testily, for he wanted to go on with his letter.

"But s'pose he comes on you when your gun ain't loaded, and his sword is, or you've missed him, as I did that hog?"

"Put on your bayonet and prod his hoss in the

breast, and then give him 18 inches o' cold steel. That'll settle him. Go and lay down, Pete, I tell you. Don't disturb me. Don't you see I'm writing?"

Shorty went on with his letter.

"How I wish you wood rite offener. Ide like to get a letter from you every"——

"Say, Corpril," broke in little Pete, "they say that them rebel cavalry kin reach much further with their swords when they're up on a hoss than you kin with your gun and bayonit, especially when you're a little feller like me, and they're quicker'n wildcats, and there's just millions of 'em, and"——

"Who says?" said Shorty savagely. "You little open-mouthed squab, are you lettin' them lyin', gassin, galoots back there fill you up with roorbacks about them triflin', howlin', gallopin', rebel cavalry? Go back there, and tell 'em that if I ketch another man breathin' a word to you about the rebel cavalry I'll come and mash his head as flat as a pancake. Don't you be scared about rebel cavalry. You're in much more danger o' bein' struck by lightnin' than of bein' hit by a rebel on hossback. Go off and go to sleep, now, and don't ask me no more questions."

"Can't I ask you just one?" pleaded Pete.

"Yes, just one."

"If we form a holler square agin cavalry will I be in the holler, or up on the banks?"

For the first time in his life, Shorty restrained the merciless jeer that would come to his lips at any exhibition of weakness by those around him. The thought of Maria softened him and made him more sympathetic. He had promised her to be a second father to little Pete. He saw that the poor boy was

being frightened as he had never been before by the malicious fun of the veterans in pouring into his ears stories of the awful character of the rebel cavalry. Shorty sucked the ink off his pen, put his hand soothingly on Pete, and said in a paternally comforting way:

"My boy, don't let them blowhards back there stuff you with sich nonsense about the rebel cavalry. They won't git near enough you to hit you with a sword half a mile long. They're like yaller dogs—their bark's the wust thing about 'em. I'll look out for you. You'll stay right by me, all the time, and you won't git hurt. You go back there to my blankits and crawl into 'em and go to sleep. I'll be there as soon's I finish this letter. Forgit all about the rebel cavalry, and go to sleep. Ter-morrer you'll see every mother's son o' them rebels breakin' their hoss' necks to git out o' range o' our Springfields."

Then Shorty finished his letter:

"Ime doin' my best to be a second father to little Pete. Heze as good a little soul as ever lived, but when I taik another boy to raise it'll be sumwhair else than in the army.

"Yores, till deth."

Just then the silver-voiced bugles in hundreds of camps on mountain-sides, in glens, in the valleys, and on the plains began ringing out sweetly mournful "Taps," and the echoes reverberated from the towering palisades of Lookout to the rocky cliffs of the Pigeon Mountains.

It was the last general "Taps" that mighty army would hear for 100 days of stormy battling.

The cheering ceased, the bonfires burned out. Shorty put his letter in an envelope, directed it, and added it to the heap at the Chaplain's tent.

Then he went back and arranged his things so that he could lay his hands unfailingly on them in the darkness of the morning, straightened little Pete out so that he would lie easier, and crawled in beside him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN.

AS usual, it seemed to the boys of the 200th Ind. that they had only lain down when the bugle blew the reveille on the morning of May 3, 1864.

The vigilant Orderly-Sergeant was at once on his feet, rousing the other "non-coms" to get the men up.

Si and Shorty rose promptly, and, experienced campaigners as they were, were in a moment ready to march anywhere or do anything as long as their rations and their cartridges held out.

The supply of rations and cartridges were the only limitations Sherman's veterans knew. Their courage, their willingness, their ability to go any distance, fight and whip anything that breathed had no limitations. They had the supremest confidence in themselves and their leaders, and no more doubt of their final success than they had that the sun would rise in the morning.

Vigorous, self-reliant manhood never reached a higher plane than in the rank and file of Sherman's army in the Spring of 1864.

Si and Shorty had only partially undressed when they lay down. Their shoes, hats and blouses were

with their haversacks under their heads. Instinctively, as their eyes opened, they reached for them and put them on.

That was a little trick only learned by hard service.

The partners started in to rouse their boys. As soon as these were fairly awake they became greatly excited. They had gone to sleep bubbling over with the momentousness of the coming day, and now that day had opened.

There was a frantic scrambling for clothing, which it was impossible for them to find in the pitchy darkness. There were exclamations of boyish ill-temper at their failure. They thought the enemy were right upon them, and every instant was vital. Monty Scruggs and Alf Russell could not wait to dress, but rushed for their guns the first thing, and buckled on their cartridge-boxes.

"Gid Mackall, you've got on my shoes," screamed Harry Josyln. "I can't find 'em nowhere, and I laid 'em right beside me. Take 'em off this minute."

"Hain't got your shoes on; can't find but one o' my own," snorted Gid in reply. "You helter-skelter little fly-up-the-crick, you never know where your own things are, and you lose everybody else's."

"There's my shoe," exclaimed Harry, as he stumbled over one.

"No; that's mine. Let it alone—give it to me," yelled Gid, and in an instant the two were locked together in one of their usual fights.

Si snatched them apart, cuffed them, and lighted a bit of candle, which he kept for emergencies, to help them and the rest find their things. He im-

proved the occasion to lecture them as to the way they should do in the future.

After awakening him, Shorty had calmed down the excited little Pete, found his shoes and other clothes for him, and seen that he put them on properly.

"Have everything all right at startin', Pete," said he, "and you'll be all right for the day. You'll have plenty o' time. The rebels'll wait for us."

"Aint them them, right out there?" asked Pete nervously, pointing to the banks of blackness out in front.

"No; them's the same old cedar thickets they wuz when you went to bed. They hain't changed a mite durin' the night, except that they've got some dew on 'em. You must git over seein' bouggers wherever it's dark. We'll build a fire and cook some breakfast, and git a good ready for startin'. You must eat all you kin, for you'll need all you kin hold before the day's over."

Si was employed the same way in quieting down the rest, seeing that every one was properly clothed and had all his equipments, and then he gathered them around a little fire to boil their coffee and broil a piece of fresh beef for their breakfast. He had the hardest work getting them to pay attention to this, and eat all they could. They were so wrought up over the idea that the battle would begin at any minute that the sound of a distant bugle or any noise near would bring them up standing, to the utter disregard of their meal.

"Take it cool, boys, and eat all you kin," he admonished them. "It's generally a long time between

meals sich times as these, and the more you eat now the longer you kin go without."

But the boys could not calm themselves.

"There, ain't that rebel cavalry galloping and yelling?" one exclaimed; and they all sprang to their feet and stared into the darkness.

"No," said Shorty, with as much scorn as he could express with his mouthful of the last issue of soft bread that he was to get. "Set down. That's only the Double Canister Battery goin' to water. Their Dutch bugler can't speak good English, his bugle only come to this country at the beginning o' the war, and he's got a bad cold in his head besides. Nobody kin understand his calls but the battery boys, and they won't have no other. They swear they've the best bugler in the army."

"Set down! Set down, I tell you," Si repeated sternly, "and swaller all the grub you kin hold. That's your first business, and it's just as much your business as it is to shoot when you're ordered to. You've got to lay in enough now to run you all day. And all that you've got to listen for is our own bugle soundin' 'Fall in!' Don't mind no other noise."

They tried to obey, but an instant later all leaped to their feet, as a volley of mule screechers mixed with human oaths and imprecations came up from a neighboring ravine.

"There! There's the rebels, sure enough," they ejaculated, dropping their coffee and meat and rushing for their guns.

"Come back and set down, and finish your breakfast," shouted Si. "That ain't no rebels. That's only

the usual family row over the breakfast table between the mules and the teamsters."

"Mules is kickin' because the teamsters don't wash their hands and put on white aprons when they come to wait on 'em," suggested Shorty.

The boys looked at him in amazement, that he should jest at such a momentous time.

"There's the 'assembly' now," said Si, as the first streak of dawn on the mountain-top was greeted by the bugler at the 200th Ind.'s Headquarters, filling the chill air with stirring notes.

"Put on your things. Don't be in a hurry. Put on everything just right, so's it won't fret or chafe you during the march. You'll save time by takin' time now."

He inspected the boys carefully as it grew lighter, showed them how to adjust their blanket-rolls and canteens and heavy haversacks so as to carry to the best advantage, examined their guns, and saw that each had his full allowance of cartridges.

"Here comes meat for the rebel cavalry," shouted one of the older members of the company, as Si brought his squad up to take its place on the left of Co. Q.

"I wouldn't say much about rebel cavalry, if I was you, Wolf Greenleaf," Si admonished the joker. "Who was it down in Kentucky that was afraid to shoot at a rebel cavalryman, for fear it would make him mad, and he might do something?"

The laugh that followed this old-time "grind" on one of the teasers of new recruits silenced him, and encouraged the boys.

As the light broadened, and revealed the familiar

hills and woods, unpeopled by masses of enemies, the shivery "2 o'clock-in-the-morning-feeling" vanished from the boys' hearts, and was succeeded by eagerness to see the redoubtable rebels, of whom so much had been said.

The companies formed up into the regiment on the parade ground, the Colonel mounted his horse, took his position on the right flank, and gave the momentous order:

"Attention, battalion—Right face—Forward—file left—March!"

The first wave rolled forward in the mighty avalanche of men, which was not to be stayed until, four months later, Sherman telegraphed North the glad message:

"Atlanta is ours, and fairly won."

As they wound around and over the hills in front, they saw the "reserves," the "grand guard," and finally the pickets with their reserves drawn in, packed up ready for marching, and waiting for their regiments to come up, when they would fall-in.

"There's a h——l's mint of deviling, tormenting rebel cavalry out there beyond the hills," they called out to the regiment. "Drop onto 'em, and mash 'em. We'll be out there to help, if you need it."

"The 200th Injianny don't need no help to mash all the rebel cavalry this side o' the brimstone lakes," Si answered proudly. "Much obliged to you, all the same."

"Capt. McGillicuddy," commanded the Colonel, as they advanced beyond where the picket-line had been, "deploy your company on both sides of the

road, and take the advance. Keep a couple hundred yards ahead of the regiment."

"Hooray," said Si, "we're in the lead again, and we'll keep it till the end o' the chapter. Co. Q, to the front and center."

They advanced noiselessly over the crest of a ridge, and the squad, which gained a little on the rest, saw a rebel videt sitting on his horse in the road some 200 or 300 yards away. The guns of the nervous boys were up instantly, but Si restrained them with a motion of his hand.

"What's the matter with him?" he asked Shorty, indicating the rebel.

"Him and his hors's wore out and asleep," answered Shorty, after a minute's study. "Look at his head and his hoss's."

"Kin we sneak up on him and git him?" asked Si.

"Scarcely," answered Shorty. "Look over there."

A squad of rebels were riding swiftly up the road toward the videt.

"Shan't I shoot him?" asked the nervous little Pete, lifting his gun to his face.

"No, no; give him a show for his life," answered Shorty, laying his hand on Pete's gun.

"It'd be murder to shoot him now." Gi' me your gun, Pete. Run down the road there apiece, and hit him or his horse with a stone and wake him up."

The boys, to whom a rebel was a savage wolf, to be killed any way that he could be caught, looked wonderingly at Si, who responded by a nod of approval.

"Won't he chop me with his sword?" asked Pete, still full of the terrors of that weapon.

"We'll look out for that. Go ahead, quick, Pete," said Si.

Poor little Pete, looking as if he was being sent to lead a forlorn hope, rushed frantically forward, picking up a stone as he ran, and hurled it with a true aim squarely against the rebel's breast, who woke with a start, clutched his carbine, and stared around, while little Pete dashed into the brush to avoid his dreaded saber.

"Look out for yourself, reb. We're a-coming," shouted Si.

The rebel whirled his horse about, fired his carbine into the air, and sped back to his friends, while the squad rushed forward and took position behind trees. The rebels came plunging on.

"Fire!" shouted Si.

The guns of the squad crashed almost together. The bullets seemed to strike near, but without taking effect on any one of the rebels, who seemed to catch sight of the rest of Co. Q coming over the crest. They whirled their horses around, and started back on a sharp trot, while the boys were reloading.

"Go ahead, Sergeant," shouted Capt. McGillicuddy, from the rear. "Follow them up. We're right behind you. Push them back on their reserves."

"All right, Cap. Back they go," shouted Si, leading forward his squad in a heavy-footed run down the road. They soon came to an opening of

somewhat level ground, made by the clearing around a cabin.

The rebel squad halted beyond the cornfields, turned about, and opened fire.

"Holy smoke, look there," gasped Monty Scruggs, as a company of rebel cavalry came tearing over the hill in front, to the assistance of their comrades.

"Them ain't many for cavalry," said Shorty, as he and Si deployed the boys behind fence-corners, and instructed them to shoot carefully and low.

"Sargint, see there, and there," shouted Alf Russell, as other companies of rebels came galloping through over the crest, while the first arrivals began throwing down the fences, preparatory to a charge.

"Yes, there's about a rijimint," Si answered coolly. "We'll need the most o' Co. Q to 'tend to them. Here they come."

"Sergeant, what's all this disturbance you're kicking up in camp?" said Capt. McGillicuddy playfully, as he deployed Co. Q. "Can't you take a quiet walk out into the country, without stirring up the whole neighborhood?"

"They seem to've bin at home and expectin' us, Capt," grinned Si, as he pointed to the augmenting swarm of horsemen.

"There does seem to be a tolerably full house," answered the Captain with a shrug. "Well, the more the merrier. Boys, shoot down those fellows who're tearing down the fences. That'll stop any rush on us, and we'll develop their force."

"It's developing itself purty fast, seems to me. There comes another rijimint," remarked Si.

The firing grew pretty noisy.

Si was delighted to see how naturally his boys took to their work. After the first flurry of excitement at confronting the yelling, galloping horde, they crouched down behind their fence-corners, and loaded and fired as deliberately as the older men.

"What sort of a breach of the peace is this you are committing, Capt. McGillicuddy?" asked Col. McBiddle, coming up at the head of the 200th Ind. "And do you want some accomplices?"

"I believe if you'll give me another company I can make a rush across there and scatter those fellows," answered the Captain.

"All right. Take Co. A. Push them as far as you can, for the orders are to develop their strength at once. I'll follow close behind and help you develop, if you need me."

An instant later the two companies rushed across the field, making a bewildering transformation in the rebels' minds from charging to being charged. The rebels were caught before they could complete their formation. There was a brief tumult of rushes and shots and yells, and they were pushed back through the woods, with some losses in killed and wounded and stampeded horses.

Si had led his squad straight across the field, against a group engaged in pulling down the fence. They were caught without their arms, and two were run down and captured. Palpitating with success, the boys rushed over to where the regiment was gathering itself together at the edge of the woods on the brow of the ridge.

"Why don't they go ahead? What're they stoppin' "

for? The whole rijimint's up," Si asked, with a premonition of something wrong.

"Well, I should say there was something to stop for," answered Shorty, as they arrived where they could see, and found the whole country in front swarming with rebel cavalry as far as their eyes could reach.

"Great Scott," muttered Si, with troubled face, for the sight was appalling. "Is the whole Confederacy out there on hossback?"

"O, my, do we have to fight all them?" whimpered little Pete, scared as much by the look on Shorty's face as at the array.

"Shut up, Pete," said Shorty petulantly, as a shell from a rebel battery shrieked through the woods with a frightful noise. "Git behind this stump here, and lay your gun across it. I'll stand beside you. Don't shoot till you've a bead on a man. Keep quiet and listen to orders."

A rebel brigade was rapidly preparing to charge. It stretched out far beyond the flanks of the regiment.

"Steady, men! Keep cool!" rang out the clear, calm voice of the Colonel. "Don't fire till they come to that little run in the field, and then blow out the center of that gang."

The brigade swept forward with a terrific yell. Si walked behind his squad, and saw that every muzzle was depressed to the proper level.

The brigade came on grandly, until they reached the rivulet, and then a scorching blast broke out from the muzzles of the 200th Ind., which made them reel and halt.

Yells of "Close up, Alabamians!" "This way, Tennesseans!" "Form on your colors, Georgians!" came from the rebels as the boys reloaded. Then all sounds were drowned in the rattling musketry, as the rebels began a hot fire from their saddles, in answer to the Union musketry.

"Captain, they are moving out a brigade on either flank to take us in the rear," said Col. McBiddle calmly to Capt. McGillicuddy. "We'll have to fall back to the brigade. Pass the word along to retire slowly, firing as we go. The brigade must be near. You had better move your company over toward the right, to meet any attack that may come from that direction. I'll send Co. A toward the other flank."

It was a perilous movement to make in front of such overwhelming force. But the smoke curtailed the manuver and the rebels only discovered it by the diminution of the fire in their front. Then they and the flanking brigades came on with ringing yells, and it seemed that the regiment was to be swept off the face of the earth. The 200th Ind. was not to be scared by yells, however, and sent such a galling fire from front and flanks, that the rebel advance lost its rushing impetus. The regiment was reaching the edge of the woods. The clear fields would give the rebel cavalry its chance.

The whole command advanced, the moment the rebels began to break under the fire, across the fields and through the woods to the crest where the 200th Ind. had first tried to stop the swarming rebel horsemen. From there they could see the broad plain rapidly vacated by their enemies, hurrying away from the pursuing shells.

The Colonel's clear, penetrating tones rang above the tumult:

"Attention, 200th Ind.! Every man for himself across the fields. Rally on the fence beyond."

Shorty, whose face had been scratched by a bullet, took little Pete by the hand. "Now, run for it, my boy, as you never run before in your life. Hold on to your gun."

There was a wild rush, through a torrent of bullets, across the cleared space, and as he jumped the fence, Si was rejoiced to see his squad all following him, with Shorty dragging little Pete in the rear.

They had scarcely struck the ground beyond, when it shook with the crash of artillery on the knoll above, and six charges of double canister tore wickedly into the surging mass of rebel cavalry.

"The Double Canister Battery got up jest in the nick o' time," gasped Shorty, as he shoved little Pete down behind a big log. "It generally does, though."

"I'm glad the brigade wasn't a mile off," puffed Si, listening with satisfaction to the long line of rifles singing tenor to the heavy bass of the cannon.

"Capt. McGillicuddy," said the Colonel, "I ordered you to develop the enemy's strength. Has it occurred to you that you somewhat overdid the thing?"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.

“**G**REAT Jehosephat, how hungry I am,” suddenly ejaculated Shorty, stopping his cheering, as the thunder of the guns died away into an occasional shot after the rebels galloping back to the distant woods on the ridge from which they had emerged.

“I must make some coffee. Wonder where I put my matches?”

“Here, Pete,” continued Shorty, as he broke off some splinters from the rails and started a little fire, “take my canteen and Si’s and yours, and run down there and find a spring, and fill ’em, before the others make a rush. Be spry about it, for there’ll be a rush there in a minute, and you won’t have no chance.”

The excited boy had to be spoken to a second time before he would come back to earth, much less comprehend the want of water and food. Like the rest of his companions, the terrific drama which had just been enacted had wrought him to a delirium, in which he could think of nothing but a world full of bellowing cannon, and a nightmare of careering, plunging horses, with savagely-yelling riders.

They could not realize that the battlecloud had

rolled away just as suddenly as it had burst upon them, and they stood there tightly grasping their reloaded guns, and staring fixedly into the distance for the next horrid development.

"I think you'll find a spring right over there where you see that bunch o' young willers, Pete," said Si, handing him his canteen. "Break for it, before anybody else gets there and muddies the water."

But Pete still stood rigid and unhearing, clutching his gun with a desperate grip, and glaring with bulging, unmoving eyes across the plain.

"Come, wake up, Pete," said Shorty, giving him a sharp shake. "Do as I tell you, and on the jump. The fight's over."

"The fight's over?" stammered the boy. "Ain't they coming back again?"

"Not on their butternut-dyed lives they ain't," said Shorty scornfully. "They've got their dirty hides as full o' lickin' as they kin hold for one day. They'll set around for a while, and rub their hurts, and try to think out jest how it all happened."

"Skip out, Pete," Si reminded the boy. "The rest o' you boys stack your guns and foller Pete."

"Hadn't we better take our guns along?" suggested Monty, holding on to his with grim fearfulness.

"No. Stack 'em; stack 'em, I tell you," said Si impatiently. "And be quick about it. They'll all git ahead o' you. Don't you see the rest stackin' arms?"

The boys obeyed as if dazed, and started to follow little Pete's lead toward the clump of willows.

The boy, full of the old nick, found an Orderly's horse nipping the grass close by the path to the

spring and, boy like, jumped on its back. The clatter of the canteens frightened the horse, and he broke into a dead run.

Do ye s'pose the fight's really over?" whispered Pete to Alf Russell, who was just behind him. "Don't you think the rebels just let go to get a fresh hold?"

"Seems so to me," answered Alf. "Seems to me



LITTLE PETE'S HORSE BOLTS.

there was just millions of 'em, and we only got away with a little passel, in spite of all that shootin'. Why, when we come out on the ridge the valley down there seemed fuller of 'em than it was at first."

"We oughtn't to get too far away from our guns," said Monty Scruggs. "Them woods right over there may be full o' rebels watching to jump us when we get far enough away."

"I don't like the looks of that hill to the left," said Gid Mackall, nervously. "An awful lot o' them went behind it, and I didn't see any come out."

"There, them bushes over there are shaking—they're coming out again," said Harry Joslyn, turning to run back for his gun.

"No, not there," nervously interjected Humphrey's, turning with him; "ain't there something stirring down there by the crick?"

"No, no," said Sandy Baker, desperately. "It's just that blame fool Pete. Come on! Come on! We've got to. We were ordered to. Le's make a rush for it, like the men in the Indian stories done when they was sent for water."

They acted on the suggestion with such vim that when Pete's horse tripped at the edge of the little run, and sent Pete over its head with a splash into the mud and water, the rest tumbled and piled on top of him.

The men on the hill, who had noticed it, set up a yell of laughter, which scared the boys worse than ever, for they thought it meant the rebels were on them again.

"Now, what new conniption's struck them dumb'd little colts?" said Si, irritably, as he strode down to them, pulled them out, and set them on their feet, with a shaking and some strong words.

"Is the rebels coming again?" gasped Pete, rubbing the mud and water out of his eyes.

"No, you little fool," said Si. "The rebels ain't comin'. They're goin' as fast as their horses kin carry 'em. They've got through comin' for today."

There ain't one of 'em within cannon-shot, and won't be till we go out and hunt 'em up again. You've come near spilin' the spring with your tormented foolishness. What on earth possessed you to climb that hoss? You need half killin', you do. Go up higher there and fill your canteens from where the water's clear. Be slow and careful, and don't rile the water. Say, I see some nice sassafras over there. I always drink sassafras tea this time o' year. It cleans the blood. I'm goin' over and see if I can't git a good root while you're fillin' your canteens."

Si walked out some distance in front of them, pulling as he walked some of the tender, fragrant, spicy young leaves of the sassafras, and chewing them with gusto. Arriving at the top of a rise he selected a young shrub, pulled it up, carefully loosed its root from the mulchy soil, and cut it off with his knife. His careless deliberation calmed the overwrought nerves of the boys, and when he returned they had their canteens filled, and walked back composedly to the fires, when they suddenly remembered that they were as hungry as Si and Shorty, and fell to work cooking their suppers.

"Is that the way with the rebel cavalry?" asked Monty Scruggs, with his mouthful of crackers and meat. "Do they come like a hurricane, and disappear again like an April shower?"

"That's about it," answered Shorty disdainfully. "That's the way with all cavalry, dad-burn 'em. They're like a passel o' fice pups. They're all yelp and bark, and howl and showin' o' teeth. They're jest goin' to tear you to pieces. But when you pick

up a stone or a club, or git ready to give 'em a good kick they're gone, the devil knows where. They're only an aggravation. You never kin do nothin' with 'em, and they kin do nothin' with you. I never kin understand why God Almighty wasted his time in makin' cavalry of any kind, Yank or rebel. All our own cavalry's good for is to steal whisky and chickens from honest soldiers of the infantry. The infantry's the only thing. It's like the big dog that comes up without any special remarks, and sets his teeth in the other dog. The thing only ends when one dog or the other is badly whipped and somethin's bin accomplished."

"Will we have to fight them cavalry again tomorrow jest the same way?" asked little Pete, still somewhat nervously.

"Lord only knows," answered Shorty indifferently, feeling around for his pipe. "A feller never knows when he's goin' to have to fight rebel cavalry any more'n he knows when he's goin' to have the toothache. The thing just happens, and that's all there is of it."

Si and Shorty, having finished their suppers, lighted their pipes, and strolled up through the regiment to talk over with the others the events of the day and the probabilities of the morrow.

Left alone, the tongues of the excited boys became loosened, and ran like the vibrations of a cicada's rattle.

"Wasn't it just wonderful?" said Monty Scruggs. "It looked as if a million circuses had suddenly let out over there.

“‘The Assyrians came down like a wolf on the fold,
And their cohorts were gleaming with purple and
gold.’

Only there didn't seem much purple and gold about them. Seemed mostly brown rags and slouch hats and long swords. Gracious, did you ever see anything as long and wicked as them swords! Seemed that every one was pointing directly at me, and they'd reach me the very next jump.”

“Of course, you thought they were all looking at you,” said Alf Russell. “That's your idea, always, wherever you are. You think you're spouting on the platform, and the center of attraction. But I knew that they were all looking at me, as folks generally do.”

“More self-conceit,” sneered Harry Joslyn. “Just because you're so good looking, Alf. I knew that they weren't bothering about any boy orator, who does most of his shooting with his mouth, nor any young pill-peddler, who sings in the choir, and goes home with the prettiest girl. They were making a dead set on the best shot in the crowd, the young feller who'd come into the war for business, and told his folks at home before he started that he was going to shoot Jeff Davis with his own hand before he got back. That was me. I saw the Colonel of one o' the regiments point his sword straight at me as they came across the run, and tell his men to be sure and get me of all others.”

“Why didn't you shoot him, if you're such a dead-shot?” asked Gid Mackall.

“Why, I was just loading my gun, when I saw him,

and as I went to put on the cap you were shaking so that it jarred the cap out of my hand, and before I could get another, the smoke became so thick I couldn't see anything."

"I shaking?" said Gib, with deep anger. "Now, Harry Josyn"——

"Come, boys; don't have a scrap, now," pleaded the serious-minded Alf. "Just think how many dead men are lying around. It looks like raising a disturbance at a funeral."

"That's so," said Jake Humphreys. "I don't think any of us is in shape to throw up anything to another about shaking. I own up that I was never so scared in all my life, and I feel now as if I ought to get down on my knees before everybody, and thank God Almighty that my life was spared. I ain't ashamed to say so."

"Bully for you, Jake," said Monty Scruggs, heartily. "We all feel that way, but hain't the nerve to say so. I wish the Chaplain would come around and open a meeting of thanksgiving and prayer."

"I tell you what's the next best thing," suggested Jake Humphreys. "Let Alf Russell sing one of those good old hymns they used to sing in the meetings back at home."

"Home!" How many thousands of miles away—how many years of time away—seemed to those flushed, overwrought boys, bivouacking on the dead-strewn battlefield, the pleasant cornfields, the blooming orchards, the drowsy hum of bees, the dear homes, sheltering fathers, mothers, and sisters; the plain white churches, with their faithful, gray-haired pastors, of the fertile plains of Indiana.

Alf Russell lifted up his clear, far-reaching boyish tenor, that they had heard a thousand times at devout gatherings, at joyful weddings, at sorrowing funerals, in that grandest and sweetest of hymns:

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name;
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of All.”

As far as his voice could reach, the rough soldiers, officers and men, stopped to listen to him—listened to him with emotions far too deep for the cheers that usually fly to the lips of soldiers at anything that stirs them. The higher officers quit talking of the plans of the morrow; the minor ones stopped, pen in hand, over their reports and requisitions; the busy Surgeons stayed their keen knives; the fussy Orderly-Sergeants quit bothering about rations and details; the men paused, looked up from their cards and cooking until the hymn was sung through.

The voice was so pure, so fresh, so redolent of all that had graced and sweetened their far-off past, that it brought to each swarming emotions for which there was no tongue.

“Bully for you, Alf; you’re a sweet singer in Israel,” said Si, brushing away a suspicion of a tear. “Spread out your blankets, boys, and lay down. Git all the sleep you kin, for there’s lots o’ work for us tomorrow. There goes tattoo!”

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIGHTING AROUND BUZZARD ROOST AND CAPTURE OF THE REBEL STRONGHOLD.

FOR the next few days there was a puzzling maze of movements, which must have completely mystified the rebel Generals—as was intended—for it certainly passed the comprehension of our own keen-eyed and shrewdly-guessing rank-and-file and lower officers.

Regiments, brigades and divisions marched hither-and-yon, wound around and over the hills and mountains, started out at a great rate in the morning, marched some distance, halted apparently half-way, and then perhaps went back. Skirmishing, that sometimes rose to the proportions of a real battle, broke out at unexpected times and places, and as unexpectedly ended. Batteries galloped into position, without much apparent warning or reason, viciously shelled some distant point, and then, as the infantry were girding up themselves for something real to follow all the noise, stopped as abruptly as they had begun, and nothing followed.

This went on so long, and apparently so purposelessly, that even the constant Si and Shorty were shaken a little by it.

“It can’t be,” said Shorty to Si, one evening after

they had gone into bivouac, and the two had drawn away from the boys a little, to talk over things by themselves, "that old Sherman's got one o' his crazy fits again, can it? They say that sometimes he gits crazier'n a March hare, and nobody kin tell just when the fit'll come on him. I never did see so much criss cross work as we've bin doin' for the last few days. I can't make head nor tail of it, and can't find anybody else that kin."

"I can't make it out no more than you kin," assented Si. "And I've thought o' that crazy idee, too. You know them boys over there in Rousseau's old division was under Sherman once before, when he was in command at Louisville, and they say that he got crazier'n a locoed steer—actually looney, so's they had to relieve him and send him back home to git cured. They'd be really scared about things, but their officers heard old Pap Thomas say that things wuz goin' along all right, and that satisfied 'em. I ain't goin' to worry so long's old Thomas is in command o' the Army o' the Cumberland, and we're in it. He'll take care that things come out straight."

"You bet," heartily agreed Shorty. "The Army o' the Cumberland'll be all right as long as he's on deck, and he kin take care o' the other armies, too, if they git into trouble. I struck some o' the Army o' the Tennessee when I went back with them prisoners today, and got talkin' with 'em. I asked 'em if Sherman wasn't subject to crazy fits, and they said yes, he had 'em, but when he did he made the rebels a mighty sight crazier'n he was. They went on to say that we'd git used to Sherman after awhile,

and he'd show us some kinks in soljerin' that we never dreamed of."

"Sich plaguey conceit," muttered Si.

"I should say so. But I never seen anybody so stuck on theirselves as them Army o' the Tennessee fellers. Just because they took Vicksburg"——

"With all the navy to help 'em," interjected Si.

"Yes, with more gunboats than we have army wagons. They think they know more about soljerin' than anybody else in the world, and ackchelly want to give us p'int's as to how to git away with the rebels."

"The idee," said Si scornfully. "Talkin' that way to the best soljers in the world—the Army o' the Cumberland. I hate conceit, above all things. I'm glad I hain't none of it in me. 'Tain't that we say it, but everybody knows it that the Army o' the Cumberland's the best army in the world, and the 200th Injianny"——

"I told 'em that the Army o' the Cumberland was the best army, because it had the 200th Injianny in it, and, would you believe me, they said they'd never even heard o' the 200th Injianny?"

"Sich ignorance," groaned Si. "Can't they read? Don't they git the papers?"

"There'd bin a fight right there, if it hadn't bin for the officers. I wanted awfully to take a fall out of a big Sergeant who said that Thomas might be a good enough man for Chairman of a convention o' farmers, but when he went to war he wanted to have sich leaders as Sherman, McPherson, and Logan, and Osterhaus. But he'll keep. We agreed to see each other later, when we'll have a private

discussion, and if he has any head left on him he'll freely acknowledge that nobody in the Army o' the Tennessee is fit to be named in the same day with Pap Thomas."

"Better turn him over to me, Shorty," said Si, meditatively. "I think I'm in better shape for an argument just now than you are. You've bin doing a good deal in the last few days, and I'm afraid you're a little run down."

"No; he's my meat. I found him, and I'll take care o' him. But there's just one thing that reconciles me to this business. In spite o' all this sashayin' and monkeying we seem to be continually edgin' up closter to them big cliffs where the rebels are, and something's got to bust purty soon. It's jist like it was at Tullyhomy, but old Rosecrans ain't runnin' things now."

"But Thomas is in the center, as he was then, and we're with him," said Si hopefully. "There's tattoo. Le's crawl in."

The other boys had been affected according to their various temperaments by the intricate and bewildering events of the past few days. The first day or two they were all on the tenter-hooks of expectation and anxiety. Every bugle-call seemed to be a notice for them to rush into the great battle. Every time they saw a regiment moving, they expected to follow and fall into line with it. They wondered why they were not sent in after every skirmish-line they saw advancing. When a rebel battery opened out in the distance they girded themselves in expectation of an order to charge it. But Si and Shorty kept admonishing them that it would be time enough for

them to get excited when the 200th Ind. was called on by name for something; that they were not expected to fight the whole campaign, but only to do a limited part of it, and they had better take things easy, and save themselves for their share when it should come to them.

It was astonishing how soon they recognized this, and settled down to more or less indifference to things that did not directly concern their own regiment. They were just at the age to be imitative, and the example of the veterans around them had a strongly-repressive effect.

So, after the second or third day of the turmoil of the opening campaign, they ceased to bother themselves openly, at least, as to why their regiment did not move when others did, as to why they did not go to the help of others that were fighting, and as to when they were to be summoned to make a desperate assault upon the frowning palisades of rock which were literally alive with rebels and belching cannon.

When the regiment was lying still they occupied and amused themselves, as did the others, according to their several bents. The medical-minded Alf Russell watched the movements and deportment of the Surgeons at every opportunity, and was especially interested in everything that he could catch a glimpse of, from feeling a man's pulse to extracting a bullet. The lathy Gid Mackall, whose appetite did not need the sharpening it got from the free mountain air, put in much of his time cooking, all possible variations of his rations with anything else that he could get hold of, and devouring the product with eagerness. In spite of Si's strict

prohibition against card-playing, the sleepy headed Jim Humphreys was rapidly, but secretly, mastering all the tricks and mysteries of camp gambling, and becoming an object of anxiety to the older gamesters whenever he pitted himself against them. Sandy Baker, whose tastes ran to mechanics, "tinkered" constantly with his rifle and equipments, studying the nature and inner workings of every part, and considering possible improvements. Sprightly Harry Joslyn was fascinated with the details of soldiering, and devoted himself to becoming perfect in the manual of arms and the facings. Little Pete Skidmore was keenly alive to all that was going on, and wanted to know everything. When he could trust himself not to get lost from his regiment, he would scurry over to the nearest one, to find out who they were, where they had come from, what they had been doing, and whither they were likely to go. But Monty Scruggs was constantly in the public eye, as he loved to be. His passion for declamation pleased officers and men. He really declaimed very well, and it was a reminder to them of home and the long-ago school days to hear him "spout" the old-time Friday afternoon favorites.

Therefore he was always called upon whenever there was nothing else to engage the men's attention, and his self-confidence and vanity grew rapidly upon the liberal applause bestowed on him. He was a capital mimic, too, and daring as well, and it was not long before he began to "take off" those around him, which his comrades enjoyed even more than his declamations.

The 11th of May, 1864, saw all the clouds of battle which had been whirling for days in such apparently diverse directions, gathering about the deep gorge in Rocky Face Ridge through which the railroad passed. "Buzzard Roost," as this was named, was the impregnable citadel behind which the rebel army had taken refuge after its rout at Mission Ridge the previous November, and the rebel engineers had since exhausted every effort to make it still more unassailable. The lofty mountain rose precipitously for hundreds of feet on either side the narrow gorge, and the last hundred feet was a sheer wall of perpendicular rock. The creek which ran through the gorge had been dammed, so that its waters formed a broad, deep moat before the mouth of the gorge. The top of the ridge swarmed with men, and to the rear of the gorge guns were massed in emplacements to sweep every foot of the passage.

It seemed madness to even think of forcing such a pass. A thousand men in the shelters of that fastness could beat back myriads, and it was known that Joe Johnston had at least 50,000 behind the Ridge. Yet Sherman was converging great rivers of men from the north, the northwest and west down upon that narrow gap, as if he meant to move the eternal rocks by a freshet of human force.

The rebels thrown out in advance of the gorge, on outlying hills, rocks and cliffs, were swept backward and into the gap by the resistless wave of blue rolling forward, fiery and thundering, gathering force and vehemence as it converged into a shortening semi-circle about the rugged stronghold.

The 200th Ind. moved forward and took its place

in the line on a hill commanding a view of the entrance to the gorge, and there waited its orders for the general advance, which seemed imminent any instant.

For miles to the right and left the woods were crackling with musketry, interspersed with the booming of fieldpieces.

The regiment had stacked arms and broken ranks.

For an hour or two the men had studied with intense eagerness the bristling fortifications of the gap and the swarming foemen at the foot of and on the summit of the high walls of rock. They had listened anxiously to the firing to the right and left, and tried to make out what success their comrades on other parts of the long crescent were having. They had watched the faces of the officers to read there how the battle was going.

But one after another found this tiresome after awhile and set himself to his usual camp employments and diversions. Some got out needles and thread, and began repairing their clothes. Some gathered in groups and smoked and talked. Many produced the eternal cards, folded up a blanket for a table, and resumed their endless sevenup and euchre or poker for buttons and grains of corn. Jim Humphreys found his way into one of these games, which was played behind a clump of bushes, and the buttons represented dimes. He was accumulating fractional currency. Gid Mackall embraced the opportunity to cook for himself a savory stew with some onions distributed by the Sanitary Commission. Sandy Baker went over his gun, saw that every screw was properly tight, and dropped the

tinest amount of oil on the trigger and the hammer, to ease their working. Pete Skidmore wandered down to the flank of the next regiment to find out if anything new had occurred. Harry Joslyn got himself into the exact "position of a soldier," with his heels together, his toes pointed at an angle of 45 degrees, and went through the manual of the piece endlessly. Si and the Orderly-Sergeant communed together about the rations for the company, and the various troubles there was always on the Orderly's mind about the company's management. Shorty got off by himself, produced from his breast his mementoes of Maria, and read over her last letter for the thousandth time, though he knew every word in it. But he seemed to get a new and deeper meaning every time he read it.

Groups of officers would come up to a little rise in front, study the distant ridge with their glasses for awhile, and then ride away.

A couple of natty young Aids followed their superiors' example, rode up, dismounted, and studied the enemy's position with great dignity and earnestness, that it might have full effect upon the brigade behind them.

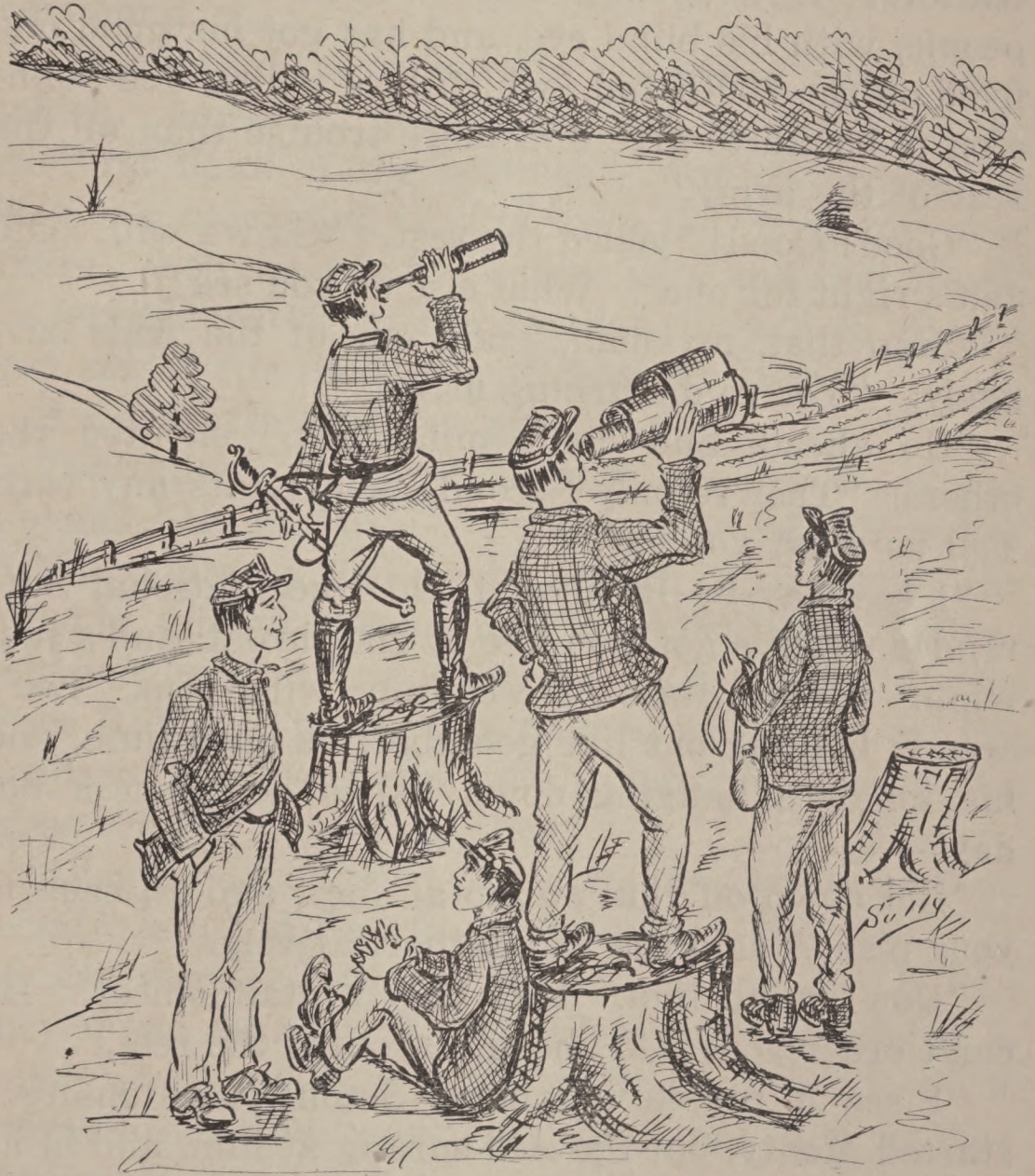
Monty Scruggs saw his opportunity. He bound some tin cans together to represent field glasses, mounted a stump, and began intently studying Buzzard Roost.

This attracted the attention of the others.

"What do you see, Monty?" they shouted.

"See?" answered he. "Just lots and gobs. I see old Joe Johnston over there, with Pat Cleburne, and Hood and Bragg, and Joe Wheeler. They're all to-

gether, and pulling off their coats, and rolling up their sleeves, and shaking their fists at the 200th Ind., and daring it to come on."



MONTY SEES THINGS, TOO.

"Tell 'em not to sweat. Just hold their horses. We'll be over presently," shouted the others, with yells of laughter. "What else do you see?"

The young Aids turned around and glanced angrily at Monty and the laughing crowd.

"I see old Jeff Davis there, with his Cabinet of traitors. He's writing a fresh proclamation to his people, with his blind eye, and has got his good one fixed on the 200th Ind., which he's telling Joe Johnston is bound to give him more trouble than all the rest o' the army."

"Good! Good!" yelled the rest. "So we will. Old Jeff's right for once. What else do you see?"

"Stop that, my man," said one of the Aids savagely. "You're disturbing us."

"Go ahead, and don't mind 'em," shouted the others. "They're only Second Lieutenants any way. Tell us what you see."

"I see way by Richmond, old Unconditional Surrender Grant's got Bob Lee by the throat, and's just wipin' up the State of Virginny with him. Lee's eyes is bulging out like gooseberries on a limb, and his tongue's hanging down like a dog's on a hot day"——

"Get down off that stump at once, and go back to your place," said the Aid authoritatively.

"Don't mind him. He's only a staff officer. He can't order you. Go ahead," shouted the rest.

"I see a couple o' young Second Lieutenants," started Monty, but the Aid sprang at him, and in an instant there was a rush of the other boys to defend him. Capt. McGillicuddy, who was usually conveniently deaf and blind to the boys' skylarking, looked up from the paper he was reading, hurried to the scene, quieted the disturbance, ordered Monty to get down and go back, and spoke sharply to the Aid

about paying any attention to the men's harmless capers.

The bugle blew "Attention," and everybody sprang to his place, and waited eagerly for the next command.

"Men," said the Colonel, in his gentle, sweet voice, which, however, was distinctly audible to the farthest flank of the regiment, "we are ordered to help our comrades by attacking the mountain over there. You see what is before you, and that it will be terrible work, but I know that you will do all that you can do for the honor of dear old Indiana."

An enthusiastic cheer answered him.

"Battalion — Take — Arms!" commanded the Colonel. Right face—Forward—File left—March!"

The regiment filed down through the woods on the hillside, and as it came into the opening at the bottom was greeted by a volley from a battery on Rocky Face Ridge. The shells screamed viciously over the heads of the men, and cut through the tops of the trees with a deafening crash.

"Wastin' good cast-iron on the landscape, as usual," laughed Shorty, to encourage the boys. "I always wonder how the rebels pick out the fellers they make cannoneers of. When they git hold of a feller who can't shoot so's to hit anything less'n a Township set up edgewise, they put him in the artillery."

"Mebbe they'll come closter next time," said little Pete with a shiver, as he trotted a little nearer Shorty.

"Naah, they'll never come no closter," said Shorty, contemptuously. "They couldn't hit even the side

o' the mountain if it wasn't in their way and no place else for the ball to go."

Just then a shell screamed so close above Shorty that he involuntarily ducked his head.

"What makes you juke, if they can't hit nothing?" inquired little Pete, and the rest of them had regained composure enough to laugh.

"O," said Shorty composedly, "that feller wasn't shootin' at me. He was shootin' at the 1st Oshkosh, which is a quarter of a mile behind. If he'd hit me it'd 'a bin an accident, and I don't want no accidents to happen just now."

Approaching the cleared space in the center of the valley, the regiment went into line in the brush and pushed through to the edge of the woods. The moment that it appeared in the fringe of brushwood a sharp volley came from the line of rebels in the brush along the opposite side of the clearing. Evidently they were not expecting an advance at that moment, for their firing was wild, and wounded but a few men.

"Hold your fire till we are across," shouted the Colonel. "Forward—Guide center—Double-quick—March!"

With a yell the regiment swept across the clearing into the brush beyond. A furious, noisy scrambling ensued in the thickets. Neither side could see 10 yards ahead, and the firing, though fierce and rapid, was not very effective. Men shot at sounds, or motions of the bushes, and the bullets, glancing on the limbs, whistled in all directions. But the 200th Ind. pressed furiously forward, and though the rebels resisted stubbornly they were gradually

pressed back up the hill. Occasionally one was killed, many were wounded, and squads were caught in clumps of brush and compelled to surrender. Si and Shorty kept their boys in hand, on the left of Co. Q, restrained them from firing until they saw something to shoot at, and saw that they did not advance until their guns were loaded. They heard a crashing volley delivered on their right front, and springing swiftly in that direction, came to a little break, across which they saw a squad of 15 or 16 rebels under the command of a Captain, with their guns still smoking, and peering into the woods to see the result of their fire. Si rushed at the Captain, with leveled gun, and ordered him to surrender.

"Are you an officer?" said the startled Captain as soon as he could gain words. "I'm a Captain. I'll not surrender to any one under my rank."

"I'm Captain enough for you," answered Si, thrusting the muzzle of his gun close to his face. "Surrender this minute, or off goes your head."

The Captain dropped his sword, and his men yielded.

The prisoners were conducted to the rear, and when Si returned with his squad to the regiment he found it had forced its way to the foot of the high wall of rock that rose straight up from the slope.

The rebels on the crest, 100 feet above, had been trying to assist their comrades below, by firing with their muskets, and occasionally sending a shell, where they could get their howitzers sufficiently depressed. Now they had bethought themselves to roll rocks and heavy stones off the crest, which fell with a crash on the treetops below.

The 200th Ind. was raging along the foot of the wall, trying to find a cleft in it by which they could climb to the top and get at their foes. Standing a few yards in the rear, under a gigantic white-oak, whose thick branches promised protection from the crashing bowlders, the Colonel was sending parties to explore every place that seemed hopeful, and report to him. When Si came up with his squad he was directed to go to the extreme left, and see what he could find.

He did so, and came to a little open space made by the washings which poured over the crest of the rock when the rain descended in torrents. There was a cleft there, but it was 40 feet above them, and surrounded by rebels, who yelled at the sight of his squad, and sent down a volley of bowlders. Si and his squad promptly dodged these by getting behind trunks of trees. They fired at the rebels on the crest, who as promptly lay down and sheltered themselves.

The firing and stone-throwing lasted an hour or more, and then seemed to die down from sheer exhaustion.

As the stones begun to come down more fitfully, and at longer intervals, Shorty shouted to those on top:

"Say, you fellers up there, ain't you gittin' tired o' that work? You ain't hurtin' nobody with them dornicks. We kin dodge 'em easy, and you're just strainin' yourselves for nothin'. Let up for awhile, till we both rest and git a fresh hold. We'll amuse you if you will."

"What'll you do?" asked one of the rebels, peering over the crest.

"Lots o' things. I'll turn one o' my famous double-back-action flip-flaps, which people have come miles to see, when I was traveling with Dan Rice. Or we'll sing you a song. We've here the World Renowned Ballad-Singer of Bean Blossom Crick. Or we'll make you a speech. We have here the Justly-Famous Boy Orator of Pogue's Run."

Everything had become quite still all around during this dialog.

"Give us a song," said the rebel, and his comrades' heads began showing over the edge of the rock.

"Now, no rock-throwing and no shootin' while he's singing'," said Shorty. "Give the boy a chance to git back to his tree after he's done."

"All right. We'll play fair. But no politics," came back from the rock.

"Go out there, Alf, on the gravel, and sing to 'em," said Shorty.

Alf Russell hesitated a moment, and then climbed up on the pile of washings and after clearing his throat, sang "When This Cruel War is Over" in his best style, and was applauded from the top of the rock and below.

"Now, give us your speech. But no politics," the rebels shouted.

Monty Scruggs stepped up on the mound and recited "Bingen on the Rhine" in his best school-exhibition style. The delight of the rebels was boundless.

"Hip-hip—Hooray! Good! Good!" they shouted. "Give us another."

Monty scratched his head to think of something appropriate, and then occurred to him Webster's

great speech in defense of the Union, which was then a favorite in the schools.

"When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, with fraternal blood. Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

The rebels listened with growing impatience to the words, and as Monty concluded with his best flourish they yelled angrily:

"Heah, we told you no politics. Git back thar, now, quick, or we'll bust your haid with this heah rock."

Shorty and Si raised their guns to shoot the man with the boulder, and Monty skipped back to the shelter of his tree, saying with a grin:

"I was bound to give 'em a little straight goods before I quit, and they got it. Old Dan Webster's very words."

"The orders is to stay right here for the night," said the Orderly-Sergeant, coming up through the brush to Si, "and be ready for anything that comes. I don't know what old Sherman means—whether he is going to send over some balloons to lift us to the top of the rocks, or set us to tunneling through. I suppose it ain't my business to know. I've got enough to do running this company. But something's got to bust inside the next 24 hours, and when it does there'll be the dumbest smash this country ever saw. Stay where you are till further

orders, and make yourselves as comfortable as possible."

The rebels on the rocks having quieted down, the boys stowed themselves around the roots of the trees, made little fires under the shelter of the rocks, cooked their suppers, smoked their pipes, and finally rolled themselves in their blankets and went to sleep.

Little Pete "snugged" in with Shorty, but when that gentleman was awakened by Si a little after daylight, Pete was gone.

Shorty fumed around at this while he was cooking his breakfast, for he wanted Pete to be there and eat heartily, in preparation for the arduous struggles of the momentous day which was breaking for them.

But little Pete continued to be absent. No one had seen him, no one had heard his voice, no one know anything about him. Shorty became greatly worried, and the others shared his feelings, and began beating up the woods around in search of some place that he might have fallen into.

With the daybreak the firing away to the left, where a lodgment had been made on Rocky Face Ridge, beyond the gap, broke out afresh, and rolled down toward the gap. The squad listened intently to it as it came nearer, for they felt that it meant the beginning of the day's bloody business. The crests above them remained silent.

Suddenly they heard little Pete's voice calling:

"Sergeant Klegg! Corporal Elliott!"

They looked in every direction, but could see no Pete.

"Sergeant Klegg! Corporal Elliott! Look up here. I'm up here on the rocks."

They turned their eyes to the crest, and there saw Pete waving his hat to them.

"Come up here," he called. "There ain't no rebels up here. They've all gone off down into the valley."

From their tense hearts the boys sent up a cheer, which drew all attention to them. The news quickly spread along the line, and was received with cheers.

"Go down that way about 100 yards," Pete called down, "and you'll find a tall pine blowed down agin the cliff. You kin climb that, and git up to where its top lays right agin a bunch of bushes. Shorty rolled on my leg this morning, and waked me up before daylight. I then thought I'd git up and take a look, and see how things appeared before they got to shooting. I found the pine tree, and clumb it mighty quiet, intending to sneak up close to the rebels. But I couldn't find none. They was all gone."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE 200TH IND. ASSAULTS THE REBEL WORKS AT DAYBREAK.

THERE were the same perplexing sounds of battle in many places and directions when the 200th Ind. went into line as there had been around Buzzard Roost.

Joe Johnston was fiercely contesting every hilltop and narrow gorge to gain time to adjust his army to the unexpected movement through Snake Creek Gap, and save the stores he had accumulated behind the heavy fortifications around Dalton.

Though they had felt themselves completely worn out by the work with the train, the prospect of a fight put new life into the 200th Ind., and they leaned on their guns and listened to the crackling of musketry and booming of artillery far away to their left, to their right, and apparently in their rear. Sometimes the sounds would come so near that the wave of battle would seem to be surely rolling down on them. Then they would clutch their guns more firmly, and their hands instinctively seek their cartridge-boxes. Then the firing would as inexplicably die down and stop, when they would again sink on the ground with fatigue.

So the late afternoon wore on. It grew very quiet

all around. Even the dull booming of the cannon far up the valley where Howard and Schofield were advancing on the heavy works immediately in front of Dalton, died down into sullen fitfulness.

The silence of the woods and the mountains as night drew on became more oppressive than the crashing sounds, the feverish movements, and the strained expectancy of the day had been.

The whip-poor-wills began to fill the evening air with their mournful calls, which accentuated and intensified the weird loneliness of the scene, where but a little while before there had been no thought but of deadly hatred and bitter strife.

"I never heard the whip-poor-wills whip so gloomily," remarked the sentimental Alf Russell, after the regiment had stacked arms, and the men were resting, exhausted and out of temper, on the ground. "Seems to me it sounds altogether different from the way they do at home; got something savage in it."

"Probably they're yelling their satisfaction over the number of men they've seen killed and wounded today," ventured Monty Scruggs. "Does 'em good to see men shooting at one another instead of birds."

"Dumbed little brutes," grumbled Shorty, nursing his hurt foot, "if they'd bin wrastlin' all day with a mule train they'd be too tired to go yellin' around like that. I always did hate a whip-poor-will, anyway. They hain't got sense enough to do anything but yell, jest like a pasel o' rebel cavalry."

"Great Scott! I wisht I knowed whether we're goin' to stay here tonight," said Si, handling his blanket roll with a look of anticipation.

"No," said the Orderly, coming down from the

right of the regiment. "We're to move forward about a mile, and establish a line for the rest of the brigade to form on. We're to go quietly, without noise or commands, and then bivouac without fires. Get your guns and fall in quietly."

As ill-tempered as tired, the boys roused up from the ground, and began taking their guns from the stacks. Harry Joslin snatched his out first, and the stack, falling over, the bayonet points struck Gid Mackall's face. The angry Gid responded with a blow landed on the side of Harry's head. In an instant the two clinched, and the others, who were in no better humor, began striking at one another in blind temper. Si and Shorty snatched the two principals apart with a good deal of violence and much show of their own tempers.

"You long legged sand hill crane," said Si, shaking Gid. "Will you always be kickin' up a rumpus? I'll break your neck if you don't act better."

"You senseless little bantam," said Shorty, with his grip on Harry's throat; "will you always be raising a ruction? Will I have to wring your neck to learn you to behave?"

"Let him alone, Shorty," said Si irritably. "He ain't to blame. This gangling fly-up the crick started it." And he gave Gid another shake.

"You let him alone, Si," said Shorty crossly. "I know better. This whelp started it, as he always does. I'll throw him down and tramp on him."

"You won't do nothin' o' the kind, Shorty. Don't you contradict me. Let him go, I tell you."

"You take your hands off that boy, or I'll make

you, Si Klegg," said Shorty hotly. "I won't see you imposin' on somebody's that's smaller'n you."

The spectacle of the two partners quarreling startled them all. They stopped and looked aghast.

"Here, what's all this disorder here," said the Orderly, coming up, impetuously, and as cross as any one. "Why don't you get into line as ordered? Sergeant Klegg, you're always making trouble for me."

"I ain't doin' nothing o' the kind. What's the sense o' your sayin' sich a thing?" Si retorted. "You know it ain't true."

"Si Klegg, be careful how you call me a liar," answered the Orderly. "I'll"——

"What in the world does all this mean?" said Capt. McGillicuddy angrily, as he stepped back to them. "What are you wasting time squabbling before the men for? Fall into your places at once, and don't let me hear another word from any of you. Don't you see the regiment is moving?"

"We'll finish this later," the Orderly whispered to Si, as he went to his place on the right.

"I'll settle with you, Shorty, when I have more time," Si remarked as he took his place.

"The sooner the better," grunted Shorty. "You can't run over me, if you are a Sergeant."

The wearied men went stumbling along the rough road for what seemed the longest mile ever known. It had grown very dark. At last a form separated itself from the bank of blackness on the left, and a voice said in a penetrating whisper:

"Is this the 200th Ind?"

"Yes," answered the Colonel.

"I'm Lieut. Snowden, of the General's staff," said the whisper.

"Yes; I recognize your voice," answered the Colonel.

"I was sent here," continued the Whisper, "to post you when you came up. You will make this your right, and form out there to the left. Do it without the slightest noise. There is a strong force of rebels out there in front. They have a line of works with abatis in front, and a fort on the hill there to the right, as you can see by looking up against the sky. You will not allow any fires to be made or lights to be shown. The other regiments will come up and form on your right and left, and you will be ready to attack and carry the line immediately in front of you the moment that it is light enough to see to move. The signal will be given by the headquarters bugle."

"Very good," replied the Colonel. "Tell the General that we'll be ready, and he'll find us inside the rebel line five minutes after the bugle sounds."

"In the meanwhile," continue the Aid, "you will keep a sharp lookout. You may be attacked, and if you see signs of evacuation you are to attack, and the other regiments will support you. The General will come up later and give you further instructions. Good night."

The men nearest the Colonel heard plainly all that was said, and it was soon known throughout the regiment. The men seemed to forget their fatigue as they moved alertly but warily into line to the left, and studied intently the sky-line of the rising ground in front.

The whip-poor-wills were still calling, but at the flanks and rear of the regiment. None of them called in front.

"It's full o' rebels over there; that's the reason," said Si to himself, as he noted this. "Yes, they're all at home, and goin' to shoot," he added in a loud whisper. "Lay down, everybody."

He was none too soon. The tramping through the bushes, and the various noises that bodies of men will make when in motion, had reached the ears of the alert rebels. A dazzling series of flashes ran along the sky-line, and a flight of bullets sang wickedly over the heads of the 200th Ind., striking in the bushes and trees far behind them.

"Don't anybody yell! Don't anybody shoot!" called the Colonel in a loud whisper, and it was repeated by the line officers. "It will reveal our position. Lie down and keep perfectly quiet. They're overshooting us."

The rebel battery in the fort waked up, and, more to show its good will than anything else, began shelling the surrounding landscape.

One of our batteries, a mile or so to the rear, which had not had an opportunity to fire during the day, could not resist this challenge, and began throwing shells at the fort with so fair an aim as to draw the attention of the rebel battery to it.

The lurid flashes of the muskets, cannon, and shells revealed a belt of jagged abatis several rods wide covering the entire front of the fort and breast-works.

"Great Scott!" muttered Si to himself, for he was not on speaking terms with Shorty, and would not

alarm the boys; "there's a porcupine nest to git through. How in the Nation are we ever goin' to do it?"

"Unroll your blankets and lie down on them," came down the line from the Colonel. "Lay your guns beside you. Don't attempt to stack them. You may attract the attention of the rebels. Everybody keep his place, and be ready to form and move at once."

"Stop firing. What are you shooting at?" said a voice of authority in the rebel works. "Who gave the order to fire?"

"The men began it themselves," said a second voice. "They heard Yankees moving over there, and commenced shooting at them."

"How do you know there are any Yankees out there? I don't believe they have advanced beyond the crest of the hill. I think they are all going down toward Resaca. Haven't you any pickets out there?"

"No. We only moved in here this afternoon, and did not know how long we were going to stay. I was ordered to stay here till further orders, to protect the road beyond."

"Well, we haven't any ammunition to waste firing at uncertainties. There's enough Yankees in sight all the time for all the bullets we have, without wasting any on imaginary ones. It'll be time enough for you to begin shooting when you see them coming to the edge of the abatis there. Before they get through that you'll have time enough to shoot away all the ammunition you have."

"I'm going to see whether there are any Yankees there," said the second voice in the rebel works.

"Jim, you and Joe go down to the edge of the abatis and see what you can see."

The wearied boys had nearly all fallen asleep on their blankets. Even the noisy artillery duel had not kept Jim Humphreys awake, and Monty Scruggs and Alf Russell followed his example soon after the firing ceased. Then Harry Joslyn and Gid Mackall, spreading their blankets apart for the first time since they had been in the service, sought rest from their fatigue and forgetfulness of their mutual anger. Si and Shorty kept sternly apart. Shorty occupied himself in fixing the blankets comfortably for a nest for little Pete Skidmore, while Si, brooding over the way that Shorty "had flared up about nothin' at all," and the Orderly-Sergeant's and Capt. McGillicuddy's unjust heat to him, had kept his eyes fixed on the skyline beyond, and had listened to the conversation of the rebel officers. It occurred to him that by watching the two rebels come down he might get an idea of a passage through the abatis, which would be useful in the morning. He strained his eyes to catch sight of their movements.

He saw two projections against the sky-line, which he knew were the men crossing the works. They separated, and he could make out two black blotches above the level of darkness and moving down the slope. One came almost directly toward him, the other going to the left. It occurred to him to capture one of the men. He would have suggested to Shorty to get the other, but he could not bring himself to speak to his partner. Keeping his eyes fixed on the man directly in front, he slowly wriggled forward without rising. The man was evidently coming

cautiously, halting every few steps, and looking and listening.

Perfect quiet reigned in the regiment. The men were mostly asleep. Those who were awake were intently watching the hill for some sign of the enemy, or as silently foreboding the happenings of the morrow.

Without making the least noise, Si reached the edge of the abatis. There a young tulip tree had been left standing, and its plentiful branches and large leaves made a thick mass of darkness. He rose upright behind, but his foot came down on a dead stick, which broke with a sharp crack. All the blood rushed to his heart. But at the same instant his head had disturbed a whip-poor-will who had taken refuge there from the noise. She flew away with a tumult of plaintive "whips." The rebel in front halted for a long time. Then he apparently concluded that an owl was after the whip-poor-will, and, reassured, came forward.

As he had crawled along, Si had felt with his hands that he was on a tolerably beaten path, which ran by the sapling he was now standing behind. He was sure that this led through the abatis, and the rebel was coming down it. The rebel came on so near that Si could hear his breathing, and Si feared he could hear his. The rebel was carrying his gun at a trail in his right hand, and putting all his powers into his eyes and ears to detect signs of the presence of Yankees. He hesitated for a little while before the sapling, and then stepped past it.

As he did so Si shot out his right arm and caught him around the neck with so quick and tight a hug

that the rebel could not open his mouth to yell. Si raised his arm so as to press the rebel's jaws together, and with his left hand reached for his gun. The rebel swayed and struggled, but the slender Southerner was no match for the broad-shouldered Indiana boy, whose muscles had been knit by hard work.

The struggle was only momentary until Si secured the gun, and the rebel's muscles relaxed from the stoppage of his breath.

"If you say a word, or try to, you're a dead man," Si whispered, as he dropped the gun, and substituted his left hand at the man's throat for his right arm. Taking silence for acquiescence, Si picked up his own gun and started with his prisoner for the Colonel. He walked upright boldly now, for the watchers on the rebel works could not see that there was more than one man in the path.

The Colonel ordered Si to bring his prisoner back into a gully some distance behind the line, where he could be interrogated without the sound reaching the men in the works.

"Where do you belong?" asked the Colonel.

"To Kunnel Wheatstone's Jawjy rijimint."

"How many men have you got over there in the works."

"Well, a right smart passul."

"What do you mean by a right smart parcel?"

"Well, a good big heap."

"What, a thousand?"

"Yes, I reckon so."

"Ten thousand?"

"I 'spects so."

"Twenty thousand."

"Mouty likely."

"You don't seem to have a clear idea of numbers. How many regiments have you got over there?"

"Well, thar's Kunnel Wheatstone's Jawjy rijimint—that's mine; then thar's Kunnel Tarrant's South Carliny rijimint, and then thar's Kunnel Bird's Tennessee rijimint, and I don't mind how many others. They've bin comin' and goin' all day, and I hain't paid no attention to 'em. I only know that thar's enough to give yo'uns a wallopin' if yo'uns only come on."

"Sergeant," said the Colonel, "you did a splendid thing in capturing this man and bringing him to me, but I fear I shall not get as much information out of him as I'd like to. I don't presume anybody really knows just how many men are over there. We've got to jump the works and take the chances on what we find."

"We're ready the minute you give the word, Colonel," said Si, saluting.

"Colonel," said Shorty's voice out of the darkness, "I've brung you one o' the rebel scouts that was piroutin' out there. I don't know as you kin make much out o' him, though, for the welt I fetched him with my gun bar'l seems to've throwed his thinkery out o' gear, and he can't talk straight."

"And so you got the other one," Si started to say to his partner, but then he remembered Shorty's "flarin' up," and held his tongue.

"I don't imagine that his 'thinkery,' as you call it, was of much account when it was in order, if it was no better than this other man's," said the Colonel,

with a smile. "Perhaps, if he could think better he wouldn't be in the rebel army. Sergeant (to the Provost-Sergeant), take charge of these two men. Give them something to eat, and send them to Division Headquarters."

Si and Shorty carefully avoided one another on their way back to the company, and declined to discuss their exploits with either the Orderly-Sergeant or Capt. McGillicuddy.

"Go out and git you a rebel for yourself, if you want to know about 'em," Shorty had snapped at the Orderly. "There's plenty more up there on the hill. It's full of 'em."

As everything now seemed quiet in front, the two partners sat down with their back against trees to catch a little sleep before the momentous movement in the morning.

It seemed to Si that he had hardly closed his eyes when the Orderly shook him and whispered an order to help arouse the men and get them into line.

"Don't make the least noise," whispered the Orderly. "I hear the rebels moving around, but we want to jump 'em before they know we're up. The further we can get through that abatis before they discover us, the fewer we'll have killed. It's going to be mighty tough work at best, and I wish that we were going over the works now."

It was the chill gray of the morning, when every man's spirits and courage are at ebb-tide. For an instant, Si felt his heart sink at the thought of the awful ordeal that confronted them. There came across his mind a swift vision of the peaceful home back in Indiana, with the pleasant fields lying about,

over which he used to go on sweet Spring mornings like this and note the flowers that had bloomed over night, and the growth the wheat had made. How sickening to be now starting to open up a hell of pain, wounds, and death. Then his natural courage and will reasserted themselves, and he began rousing the boys, but with a tenderness born of the thought that their hearts would be as low as his in that bleak hour.

Jim Humphreys waked up stolidly, and without a word began preparing to fall in. Alf Russell's and Monty Scruggs's faces turned ashy after they had fairly awakened, and they picked up their guns with nerveless fingers.

Harry Joslyn took the position of a soldier, with his gun at an order, his lips tightly closed, and his eyes fixed on the rebel position, as the spreading light developed it. Sandy Baker fidgeted about at one time tinkering with his gun and equipments, and then stopping half-way in the task he had started and falling into a fit of musing. Little Pete Skidmore wandered about, looking into Si's and Shorty's grave faces, and then into others equally solemn, and finding no comfort in any. It was the first time that he heard no joke or quip flash along the forming line to bring cheers or laughter.

"Come, boys," said Si, kindly, "eat your breakfasts. You can't make no coffee nor fry no meat, but you'd better fill up on cold grub. You'll need all you can eat."

The mention of something to eat seemed to remind Gid Mackall of his usual appetite. He pulled a

cracker out of his haversack and bit it, but it seemed distasteful, and he spat the piece out.

"The orders are," said the Orderly-Sergeant in a low tone, as he passed down in front of the company, "to strip off your bankets, canteens, and haversacks, and pile them. They'll be in the road in the rush, and catch in going through the abatis."

"Orderly," said Shorty in his most conciliatory way, "if you want to do me a favor make Pete Skidmore one of the detail."

"I ain't asking suggestions from you," said the Orderly, still surly. "But I shall detail Baker and Skidmore for the duty."

The boys flung their things off with something like desperation in their looks.

It was now daylight, but a dense fog prevented seeing more than a few feet.

"We can't wait any longer," said the Colonel. "Pass the word down the line to move forward. Make no noise till the enemy opens fire. Then everybody push forward as rapidly as possible for the works."

"The first fire will probably go over our heads and do little damage," said Capt. McGillicuddy, stepping down to the center, so that his whisper could be heard by all. "It's always so when men fire downhill. Then, you all want to be careful and fire low, so as to hit as many as possible, and rattle them in their future firing. The more of them we can hit the less of us will be hit afterward. Forward—Guide right!"

It seemed as if the crashing of their marching feet was so loud that the rebels on the hill could not fail to hear it, and they held their breaths in painful expectancy of the volley. But they had gotten a rod

or more into the entangling brush of the abatis, and were stumbling and crashing amid the baffling branches, before they heard the voice of the previous night command:

“Ready—Aim—aim low—Fire!”

The rebel muskets crashed together in a terrific volley, which generally passed over the heads of the 200th Ind., though a few men fell into the brush with wounds.

Si had gone up the path that he had found the night before, and therefore had no struggle with the fallen trees to shake his nerves and disturb his aim. He had calculated upon this. He brought his musket down deliberately and took good aim at the point whence the voice of command had come. As his gun cracked he heard voices cry:

“The Kunnel’s shot. Look out for the Kunnel thar.”

Another voice immediately spoke up in command: “Steady, men! Keep cool! Fire low, and give it to the blue-bellied scoundrels!”

Then broke out a mad rage of death and destruction, in which both sides seemed in the fiercest insanity of murder. The 200th Ind., encouraged by the shouts of their officers, pressed forward through the baffling tree-tops, stumbling, falling, rising again, firing as fast as they could load their guns, and yelling like demons. They were frantic to get through the obstructions and come to hand-to-hand struggle with the fiends who were yelling and firing from the top of the breastworks.

The rebel battery in the fort began hurling a tornado of shells as near as they could bring their guns

to bear on the yelling. This aroused its enemy battery of the night before, and it opened up viciously. The regiments to the right and left of the 200th Ind. moved forward at the sound of the firing, and added to the dinning turbulence.

Si had kept to the path, firing coolly and with deadly aim as he kept pace with the line, which was fiercely forging through the brush. There had gathered behind him Jim Humphreys, Harry Joslyn, and Gid Mackall. The rest had gathered over toward Shorty, who was raging through the abatis, tearing aside the branches which impeded the others, yelling, swearing most horribly, and firing as a loaded gun would be handed him. He happened to look around to see who was handing him guns, and saw that it was Pete Skidmore and Sandy Baker.

"I thought you little brats was ordered to stay behind with the things," he gasped.

"I know we was," whimpered little Pete as he capped a gun and handed it to Shorty; "but we couldn't stay when we heard the yelling and shooting. We was so scared that we was afraid to stay there, so we hunted you up, and"——

"Come on, boys," yelled Shorty to the others. "Go ahead. We're almost through, and then we'll salivate them whelps of damnation."

A bullet came so nigh Si's face that it seemed to burn him, and then he heard it strike. Jim Humphreys fell without a groan—a bullet through his brain.

"Don't mind that. Forward, boys," shouted Si. "Here's the end of the abatis."

Gid Mackall fell, and Harry Joslyn turned to help him.

"Don't mind him. Come on," Si called over his shoulder, as he rushed in the clear place, just at the



THE CHARGE THRU THE ABATIS.

edge of the shallow ditch in front of the works. "Everybody this way."

All that was left of the regiment was now through the abatis. The fog suddenly lifted, and showed the

combatants face to face, with only the ditch and the bank of earth between them. The sight was so startling that both sides paused for an instant.

"Forward, 200th Ind.! Rally on your colors!" rang out the clear, sweet, penetrating voice of the Colonel, as he snatched the colors from the hand of the third man who had borne them since the regiment moved forward, and sprang up the side of the works.

Of the pandemonium that reigned inside the rebel works for the next few minutes Si only recollected seeing the Orderly-Sergeant, bareheaded, and with bayonet fixed, leap down from the bank and transfix a man who tried to snatch the flag from the Colonel's hand. Si arrived just in time to shoot the rebel officer who was striking at the Orderly with his sword, while Shorty came up, knocking down a winrow of men with his gun swung by the butt as a club, to rescue Si from three rebels who were trying to bayonet him.

All at once the entire rebel line broke and ran down the hill in a wave of dingy brown, while another wave of blue rolled over the works to the right and left of the 200th Ind.

"I hope you ain't hurt, Orderly," said Si, dropping the butt of his musket on the ground, and wiping his flushed face. "I thought that officer was goin' to git you, sure."

"He would, if it hadn't been for you, Si. He got in one slash on me, but it ain't much, I think. But Shorty helped you out of a tight box."

"Yes; Shorty generally does that," said Si, with

a beaming look on his partner. "He's the best soldier in the regiment, and kin always be trusted to git in on time anywhere."

"Well, I'm afraid it 'll be a short roll I'll have to call this evening," said the Orderly, with a sorrowful expression. "I suppose we'd better go back through that brush and look up the boys that were dropped."

CHAPTER XVII.

GATHERING UP THE BOYS AFTER THE BATTLE.

“**H**OORAY for Injianny. Injianny gits there every time,” roared Si, joining the yelling, exultant throng crowding around the Colonel. “The old 200th wuz the first to cross the works, and miles ahead o’ any other rejimint.”

“Bully for the Wild Wanderers of the Wabash,” Shorty joined in. “They’re the boss regiment in the army o’ the Cumberland, and the Army o’ the Cumberland’s the boss army on earth. Hooray for Us & Co. Le’s have a speech. Where’s Monty Scruggs?”

“Yes, where’s Monty?” echoed Si, with a little chill at his heart, for he had not remembered seeing the boy since they emerged from the abatis, just before the final rush.

“Well, le’s have a song, then,” said Shorty, as Si was looking around. “Where’s Alf Russell?”

“Yes, where’s Alf Russell?” echoed Si, with a new pang clutching at his heart, for he then recalled that he had not seen Alf since he had helped him up the embankment, immediately after which Si’s thoughts had been engrossed by the struggle for the flag. “Did any of you boys see either Alf or Monty?” he asked nervously.

“And has anybody seen Pete Skidmore?” chimed

in Shorty, his voice suddenly changing from a tone of exultation to one of deepest concern. "Why don't some o' you speak? Are you all dumb?"

Somehow everybody instinctively stopped cheering, and an awed hush followed.

"All of Co. Q step this way," called out the Orderly-Sergeant. All of the usual "rasp" had left the strong, rough voice. There was a mournful tremor in it. "Fall in, Co. Q, over there by this pile of picks and shovels."

Scarcely 20 of the 80 stalwart youths who had lined up at the foot of the rugged palisades of Rocky Face two evenings before grouped themselves together in response to the Orderly's call.

Capt. McGillicuddy, the Orderly, Si, and Shorty strained their eyes to see more of the company disengaging themselves from the throng around the Colonel.

The Orderlies of the other companies called to their men to fall in at different places.

The Colonel looked at the muster with sad eyes.

"Didn't nobody see nothin' o' little Skidmore?" savagely repeated Shorty, walking back to the works and scanning the country round. "Was you all so blamed anxious lookin' out for yourselves that you didn't pay no attention to that little boy? Nice gang, you are."

"Orderly, take the company back into the abatis, and look for the boys," ordered Capt. McGillicuddy.

"Tention, company!" commanded the Orderly. "Stack arms! Right face—Break ranks—March!"

"Hello, boys," said Monty Scruggs's voice, weak,

but unmistakably his, as the company recrossed the works.

"Great heavens! he's bin shot through the bowels?" thought Si, turning toward him with sickening apprehension of this most dreaded of wounds. Then, aloud, with forced cheerfulness:

"I hope you ain't hurt bad, Monty."

"I was hurt bad enough, the Lord knows," answered the boy with a wan smile. "I hain't been hurt so bad since I stubbed by sore toe last Summer. But I'm getting over it pretty fast. Just as I started up the bank a rebel threw a stone as big as my fist at me, and it took me square where I live. I thought at first that whole battery over there in the fort had shot at me all at once. Goodness, but it hurt! My, but that fellow could throw a stone! Seemed to me that it went clear into me, and bent my back-bone. I've been feeling to see if it wasn't bent. But we got the works all right, didn't we?"

"You bet we did," Si answered exultantly. "Licked the stuffin' out of 'em. Awful glad you're no worse hurt, Monty. Make your way inside there, and you'll find the Surgeon. He'll bring you around all right. We're goin' to look for the other boys."

"Alf Russell caught a bullet," said Monty Scruggs. "I heard him yell, and turned to look at him, when that rebel's bowlder gave me something else to think about, so I don't know where he is."

"Gid Mackall's lying over there, somewhere," said Harry Joslyn, who was all anxiety in regard to his old partner and antagonist. "Let me go and find him."

"Go ahead," said Si, helping Monty to his feet. "I'll be right with you."

While Si was going back the way he had come Shorty was tearing through the tangled brush, turning over the tree-tops by main strength, searching for Pete Skidmore. The rest of the company were seeking out the fallen ones hither and thither, and calling to one another, as they made discoveries, but Shorty only looked for Pete Skidmore. Si and Harry presently came to Gid Mackall's body, lying motionless in a pool of blood that dyed crimson the brown leaves thickly covering the ground. His cap had fallen off, and his head had crushed down into a bunch of slender oak twigs; his eyes were closed, and his callow face white as paper.

"O, he's dead! He's stone dead," wailed Harry Joslyn. "And just think how I quarreled and fought with him this morning."

"Mebbe not," said Si, to whom such sights were more familiar. "That bullet hole in his blouse is too low down and too fur out to've hit either his heart or his lungs, seems to me. Mebbe he's only fainted from loss o' blood. Ketch hold o' his feet. I'll take his head, and we'll carry him back to the Surgeon. Likely he kin bring him to."

The rough motion roused Gid, and as they clambered back over the works, Harry was thrilled to see him open his eyes a little ways.

"Apparently," said the busy Surgeon, stopping for a minute, with knife and bullet-forceps in his blood-stained hands, to give a brief glance and two or three swift touches to Gid, "the ball has struck his side and broke a rib or two. He's swooned from loss

of blood. The blood's stopped flowing now, and he'll come around all right. Lay him over there in the shade of those trees. Put something under his head, and make him as comfortable as possible. I'll attend to him as soon as I can get through with these men who are much worse off than he is."

And the over-worked Surgeon hurried away to where loud groans were imperatively calling for his helpful ministrations.

Si and Harry broke down a thick layer of cedar branches to make a comfortable bed for Gid, placed a chunk under his head, and hurried away again to search for Alf Russell. They went over carefully that part of the works they had crossed, and the abatis in front, but could find no trace of him. They feared that after he had been shot he had crawled back under the shelter of some tree-tops, to protect him from the flying bullets, and died there. They turned over and pulled apart the branches for a wide space, but did not succeed in finding him, or any trace. But they found Bob Willis, stark in death, lying prone in the top of a young hickory, into which he had crashed, when the fatal bullet found him pressing courageously forward. Him they carried pitifully forward, and added to the lengthening row of the regiment's dead, which was being gathered up.

Then they went reluctantly back—shuddering with the certainty of what they should find, to bring in Jim Humphreys's body.

Harry Joslyn was so agitated by the sight of Humphreys's mangled head and staring eyes that Si made him turn his back, place himself between the feet, one of which he took in each hand, and go before in

carrying the body back. Si stripped the blouse up so as to cover the head, and took the shoulders between his hands, and so another body was added to the row of the regimental dead.

Si himself was so sick at heart that he had little inclination to continue the search farther than to look over the wounded, as they were brought in, in hopes of finding some of his squad there.

"There are three of us yet missing," he said. "Mebbe they've got mixed up with the Kankakee boys on our left, and'll come in all right after awhile. Mebbe they're out with Shorty somewhere. I'll wait till he comes in. Harry, I expect me and you'd better dig poor Jim's grave. There's no tellin' how long we'll stay here. Jim 'd rather we put him under than strangers what don't know and care for him. It's all we kin do for the poor feller; I'll git a pick and you take a shovel. We'll make the grave right here, where the Colonel lit when he jumped over the works with the flag. That'll tickle Jim, if he's lookin' down from the clouds. Too bad, he couldn't have lived long enough to see us go over the embankment, with the Colonel in the lead, wavin' the flag."

"The best thing," said Harry, forgetting his sorrow in the exciting memories of the fight, "was to see the Orderly sock his bayonet up to the shank in the rebel, and you blow off that officer's head"——

"Hush, Harry. Never speak o' that," Si admonished him.

"And see you," continued Harry, "stand off all three of them rebels, who was tryin' to bayonet you, until Corp'l Elliott came raring down, swinging his

gun like a flail. Great Scott! didn't he lay 'em out, though! I saw it all, as I was loading my gun in nine times to shoot one of the rebels attacking you. I'd just got the cap on, when Corp'l Elliott loped in."

"Orderly," said Si a little later, "we've got Jim Humphreys's grave dug. Will you take the things out of his pockets to send to his folks? and then we'll bury him."

"Better wait till the Captain comes back and gives the orders," said the Orderly. "I don't want to touch his pockets without the Captain's orders. Then, we ought to have his blanket to bury him in. You go ahead and dig Bob Willis's grave, and I'll take a detail back and bring up the blankets and things."

Shorty had pushed his unavailing search for little Pete far past the point where he remembered to have seen the boy, in the midst of the fighting. He had torn his hands and worn out his strength in tearing aside the brush to expose every possible place that the dying boy or his dead body might be concealed. He had reached the further side of the obstruction, and sat down on a stump, in despair of heart and exhaustion of body.

Those with him, more intent on getting something to eat, had pushed on back to where their haversacks and canteens and blankets had been left.

Presently Shorty heard a call across the little valley:

"Cor—po—ral Ell—iott. Cor—po—ral Ell—iott!"

"Well, what is it?" Shorty called back, crustily.

"Lit—tle—Pete—and—Sandy—Ba—ker—is—o—ver—here," came back upon the bright Spring air.

Shorty sprang up electrified, and tore across the

intervening space at the double-quick. He found Pete and Sandy Baker standing soberly on guard over the line of the company's blankets and belongings.

"Great Jehosephat, you little brats, how did you git here?" he exclaimed, snatching little Pete up and hugging him.

"Why shouldn't we be here?" asked Pete, as soon as he could get breath. "Didn't the Captain order us to stay here? Me and Sandy follered you fellers until you jumped inside the works, and the rebels was a runnin'. We stood on top o' the bank and shot at the rebels as fast as we could load our guns. We kept shootin' at 'em till they got clean down to the road. Then we saw the Captain lookin' over our way, and we thought he was comin' over there to skin us alive for leaving the things, and we ducked down behind the bank and run back here as fast as we could fetch it. You ain't goin' to tell the Captain on us, and have us tied up by the thumbs, are you, Corporal? Everything's safe. Nothing's gone. You won't tell, will you?"

"O, you worthless little scamp," said Shorty, with tears of joy in his eyes. "You ain't worth the powder that'd blow you up. I could pound you for the worry you've given me in the last hour. But you ain't hurt a bit, are you?"

"Nope," answered Pete. "But we both got awfully scratched runnin' through that brush. Say, wasn't the way the boys jumped the works and waded into them sardines just grand?"

The Orderly-Sergeant and his detail came back for the things, and Shorty and the boys, picking up those

belonging to the squad, made their way to the company.

By the time they got back everybody's emotions had subsided sufficiently to allow him to remember that he was terribly hungry, and that the next business in order should be the cooking of the first warm meal they had had for more than a day. Fires were soon blazing in every direction, and the air was fragrant with the smell of hot coffee and cooking meat. Even Monty Scruggs felt that the kink had gone out of his backbone, and the disturbance in his dietetic department had sufficiently subsided to allow him to enjoy a cup of coffee and piece of toasted meat on a hardtack. The Surgeon had reached Gid Mackall, and had put him in comfortable shape.

The bodies of Bob Willis and Jim Humphreys were wrapped in their blankets, and mournfully consigned to the earth. A cedar bush was stuck in the head of each grave, and Si, finding a piece of smooth board and a chunk of soft charcoal from a fire, sat down on the bank, and begun laboriously composing the following inscription:

JAMES HUMFRI

CO. Q.

200th injianny VolunTea Infantry

KiLD may, 15th 1864

He dide For His country

The lord luvs a

Braiv man

"That's all right, Si," said Shorty coming up with his mouthful of hardtack and meat, and inspecting Si's work with critical approval. "You kin lay away

over me and all the rest when it comes to writin' and composin'. And you know how to spell, too. I wish I had your education. But I never had a chance to go to school."

"Then you think it'll do, Shorty," said Si, much flattered by his partner's approval.

"Yes, it's just bully. But I think you ought to say something about Jim's good character. That's usual on tombstones. You might say of him that he had in him the makin' of the finest poker player in the Army of the Cumberland. I never see a sleepy-headed boy pick up the fine pints o' the game like he did, and he had nerve, too, along with his science."

"No, it wouldn't do at all to put anything o' that kind on," answered Si, going to the grave, and driving the board down with a pick. "Mustn't let Jim's folks know for the world that he gambled. It'd be the last straw on his poor old mother, who's a strict Baptist. She may stand hearing that he's killed, but never could that he played cards. What in the world's become of Alf Russell, do you s'pose?"

"Who in Jeff Davis's dominions is that comin' up?" said Shorty, scanning an approaching figure. "Looks as if he'd had his head busted and then tied up agin with strings."

The figure certainly looked like Alf Russell and wore Alf Russell's clothes, but the head was unrecognizable. A broad white bandage encircled the face, going from the top of the forehead around under the chin, and there were several folds of it. Then it ran around the head transversely, covering the nose and the cheeks, and only allowing the mouth and the eyes to show.

"Hello, boys," said a weak voice, which was unmistakably Alf Russell's.

"Hello, Alf," said Si delightedly. "I'm so glad to see you. I've bin huntin' everywhere for you. What's happened to you? Badly hurt?"

"Nothing, only the left side o' my head tore out," said Alf feebly. "Something struck me, probably a bomb-shell, just as I was going up the bank after you. I went down to our Surgeon, but he was too busy to attend to me. I then found the brigade hospital, but the Surgeons there were too busy, too. They gave me a roll of bandages, and told me to fix it up myself. I did it with the help of one of the men who was waiting to have his leg dressed. I fancy I did quite a neat piece of bandaging, as well as the Surgeons themselves could've done it. Don't you think so?"

"Great Scott!" gasped Si, "you couldn't be walkin' around with the side of your head knocked out. I'm astonished at you."

"So'm I," returned Alf placidly. "I'm surprised that I'm doing as well as I am. But I gave myself good attendance, and that's a great thing. I'm awful hungry. Got anything to eat? Where's my haversack?"

"Here it is," said Si, readily. "And here's a cup o' hot coffee. I'll brile you a piece o' meat. But really, I don't think you ought to eat anything before the Surgeon sees you. Mebbe it won't be good for you."

"I'll chance it," said Alf desperately, reaching for the cup of coffee. "I'm sure it'll be better for me to eat something."

"Le's go down and see the Surgeon," insisted Si.

"No," protested Alf, "it ain't hurting me much now, and he's awful busy with other men, so we hadn't better interrupt him."

"The Surgeon ought to see you at once, Alf," interjected Shorty. "Here comes one of 'em now. Doctor, will you please look at this boy."

"Certainly," said the Surgeon, stopping on his way. "I guess I can spare a minute. Take off that bandage, my boy."

"Don't mind me, Doctor," said Alf. "'Taint hurting me now, at all, scarcely. I did it up very carefully."

"Take off the bandage at once, I tell you," said the Surgeon imperatively. "I haven't any time to waste. Let me see your wound."

Alf set down his cup of coffee, and began laboriously unwinding the long bandage, while the rest stood around in anxious expectation. Yards of folds came off from around his forehead and chin, and then he reached that around his nose and the back of his head. Still the ghastly edges of the terrible wound did not develop. Finally the blood-soaked last layer came off, and revealed where a bullet had made a shallow but ugly-looking furrow across the cheek and made a nick in the ear.

"Alf, that rebel come dumb'd nigh missin' you," said the greatly relieved Si.

"If you should happen to ketch cold in that it wouldn't git well for a week," added Shorty.

"Give me that bandage," said the Surgeon just before he hurried away. "Take this sticking-plaster and draw the lips of the wound together, and if you keep the dirt out it may heal without a scar."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ARTILLERY DUEL AND A "DEMONSTRATION" ON THE ENEMY'S POSITION.

“WELL, that ain't going to heal without a scar,” Alf Russell consoled himself, as he studied his hurt with a little round pocket looking-glass, a screen of bushes concealing him from his unappreciative comrades. “It's more than Monty Scruggs nor Harry Joslyn nor Sandy Baker'll have to show for the fight. It's even more than Gid Mackall has, even though he is knocked out. I ought to be sent to the hospital, too. It'll be something to write home to father and mother, and they'll put it in the paper and the folks'll talk about it. Gracious, there's a bugle blowing again. Wonder what that means?”

“That's the Headquarters bugle,” said Si, pricking up his ears. “That's ‘Attention.’ Git your traps together, boys. ‘Assembly’ 'll come next.”

“Good gracious!” gasped Alf Russell, coming out from behind the bushes, “they don't expect us to do any more fighting today, do they?”

“Very likely,” said Shorty, helping Pete Skidmore on with his blanket-roll. “The job ain't done till it is done, and there's lots o' rebels over there yit who need lickin'. Now's the best time to finish it. This

ain't nothin' to Stone River and Chickamaugy. Got your canteen full, Pete? Better fill it before we start. Take mine, too. Don't go any further'n that first spring there, for I don't want to take no chances on losin' you again."

The cannonading in the distance grew fiercer, and regiments could be seen rushing up at the double-quick. Long, shrill rebel yells came from the hill-tops, and were answered by volleys and deep-toned cheers.

Another bugle-call rang out from Brigade Headquarters.

"Fall in, Co. Q," sharply commanded the Orderly-Sergeant.

With a shiver of apprehension, with a nervous memory of the bitter hours just past, with the sight before their eyes of the scarcely-cold dead, the remainder of the company fell in with sadly-shrunk ranks.

"Orderly, we need some more cartridges," suggested Shorty.

"I've been thinking of that," replied the Orderly, "and wondering where to go for them."

"I saw some boxes of Enfields up there toward the battery," said Si. "The rebels left 'em. They'll fit our guns, and them English cartridges is just as good as ours."

"Pike over and get them, quick, before the other fellows drop on to 'em," said the Orderly.

"Gracious! going to shoot the rebels with their own bullets," remarked Monty, who had nearly recovered, and came up pluckily to take his place in the ranks. "Isn't that great medicine! How I should

like to pop one into that fellow that belted me with that bowlder."

"Hello, Monty," called Shorty jovially to drive out the sad thoughts. "Got that kink out o' your backbone? Bully boy. You've got the right kind of nerve. You'll be a man before your mother yet."

"Yes, and I'm here, too, and don't you forget it," said Alf Russell, not to be outdone by Monty nor unnoticed. "By rights, I ought to be in the hospital."

"By rights, I ought to be a Jigadier-Brindle," retorted Shorty, "but I never could git Abe Lincoln to take that view of it. Here, fill up your cartridge-box. You'll need lots of 'em, if you're only goin' to shoot to crease your rebels, as that feller did you."

It was not brilliant pleasantry, but it served. It set them to thinking of something else. They hastily filled their cartridge-boxes, adjusted their blankets, and when the bugle sounded forward they started with something of their original nerve.

The regiment moved off at the head of the brigade, and after a march of a mile or so came out upon a hill from which they could see one of our batteries having an unequal fight with several of the rebel batteries in a fort far to its front. Our cannoneers were standing up bravely to their work, but the rebel shells were bursting about them in a wild storm of crashing, deafening explosions, and hurtling, shrieking masses of iron. The sharp crack of their own rifles was at times drowned by the ear-splitting din of the bursting shells.

"Goodness!" murmured Monty Scruggs, with colorless lips, as the regiment came into line and

moved forward to the battery's line of caissons at the bottom of the hill. "I'm so glad I didn't enlist in the artillery. I don't see how anybody up there can live a minute."

"Yes, it looks like as if those artillery boys are earnin' their \$13 a month about every second of their lives," remarked Shorty. "There ought to be some other batteries loafin' around somewhere that could join in."

The boys leaned on their muskets and watched the awful spectacle with dazed eyes. It seemed far more terrible even than the ordeal through which they had just been.

The battery was one of the oldest and best in the army, and its "fire discipline" was superb.

The Captain stood on a little elevation to the rear and somewhat apart, intently studying the rebel line through his field-glasses. After a few words of direction as to the pointing of the guns, and the command, "Begin firing," he had given no orders, scarcely spoken. He could not have been heard in that terrible turmoil. He had simply brought his terrible engine of destruction—the engine upon which he and his men had lavished years of laborious drilling and training—into position, and set it going.

What the result would be fate alone would determine. That was a matter that neither he nor his men regarded. If it destroyed or crippled its opponents it was simply doing the work for which it had been created. If its opponents destroyed it, that was a contingency to be accepted. It was there to endure that fate if so ordered.

Behind the wings of the battery stood the Lieu-

tenants, leaning on their sabers, and gazing with fixed, unmoving eyes on the thunderous wrack and ruin.

They said nothing. There was no reason for saying anything. Everything was working systematically and correctly. Every man was doing his best, and in the best way. Nobody needed reminder, reprimand, direction or encouragement.

Similarly, the Sergeants stood behind their sections, except that one after another they stepped forward to the guns to take the places of men who had fallen and could not be replaced. At the guns the men were working with the swiftness of light flashes, and the unerring certainty of machines. To the watchers at the base of the slope they seemed to weave back and forth like some gigantic, demoniac loom, as they sprang at their guns, loaded them, "broke away" as they fired, leaped back again, caught the gun in its recoil, hurled it forward, again reloaded, "broke away" and fired, all quicker than thought. A shell took off a sponger's head, but the sponge-staff was caught by another before it fell, and the gun fired again without a pause. A shrapnel swept away every man about one gun. The Lieutenant looked inquiringly at the Sergeant, and in an instant another squad seemed to spring up from the ground to continue the firing without missing a note in the battery's rhythm.

The groups about each gun thinned out, as the shrieking fragments of shell mowed down man after man, but the rapidity of the fire did not slacken in the least. One of the Lieutenants turned and motioned with his saber to the riders seated on their

horses in the line of limbers under the cover of the slope. One rider sprang from each team and ran up to take the place of men who had fallen.



HOORAY FOR THE OLD BATTERY!

The next minute the Lieutenant turned and motioned again, and another rider sprang from each

team and ran up the hill. But one man was now left to manage the six horses attached to each limber. He soon left, too, in obedience to the Lieutenant's signal, and a faint, bleeding man came back and climbed into his place.

A shrapnel shell burst almost under the left gun, and lifted it up in the air. When the smoke opened a little not a man could be seen about the cannon. A yell of exultation floated over from the rebel line.

The Lieutenant unbuckled his saber, dropped it to the ground, and ran forward to the cannon. Two or three men rose slowly from the ground, upon which they had been prostrated, and joined the Lieutenant in running the gun back to its place, and reloading it.

"Hooray for the old battery! Bully boys! Made o' right stuff," shouted Shorty enthusiastically. "Never ketch me saying nothin' agin' the artillery agin. Men who act like that when they're standin' right in the middle o' hell with the lid off are 18-karat fine."

"Captain," suggested Si, who was fidgeting under the excitement of a scene in which he was taking no part, "wouldn't it be well for some of us to go up there and help the battery boys out? I could sponge and ram."

"No," answered the Captain; "help has been sent for for them, and there it comes."

He pointed back over the hill to where two batteries were coming from different directions on a dead run. It was a magnificent sight. One battery was following the road, and the other cutting across the open space in a hot race to get ahead and be in action first.

The Captains were galloping ahead to point out the way. The Sergeants were alongside, seconding the whips of the drivers with strokes of the flats of their sabers on the animals' hanches. The six horses to each gun were galloping like mad, snatching the heavy piece over gullies, bumps, logs, and rocks as if it were a straw. The gunners had abandoned their usual calm pose with folded arms on the limber chests, and were maintaining their seats only by a desperate clutch on the side-irons.

The boys turned even from the storm in front to watch the thrilling spectacle.

The two Captains were fairly abreast as they led their batteries up the long slope, crushing the brush, sending sticks and stones flying from the heavy, flying wheels. Both reached the crest at the same time, and the teams, wheeling around at a gallop, flung the muzzles of the cannon toward the enemy. Without waiting for them to stop the nimble cannoneers sprang to ground, unlimbered the guns, rolled them into position, sent loads down their black throats, and before it was fairly realized that they had reached the crest hurled a storm of shells across the valley at the rebel batteries.

"Hooray! Hooray! They're gittin' some o' their own medicine now," yelled the excited regiment. "Sock it to 'em. How do you like that, you ill-begotten imps of rebels?"

The rebel cannoneers seemed to lose heart at once under the storm of fire that beat upon them. The volume of their fire diminished at once, and then became fitful and irregular. Two of their limbers

were blown up in succession, with thunderous noise, and this further discouraged them.

Obeying a common impulse, the 200th Ind., regardless of the dropping shells, had left its position, and pressed forward toward the crest, where it could see what was going on.

The Colonel permitted this, for he anticipated that a charge on the rebel works would follow the beating down of the artillery fire, and he wanted his regiment to be where it would get a good start in the race to capture a rebel battery. He simply cautioned the Captains to keep their men in hand and ready. As Capt. McGillicuddy called Co. Q closer together, it occurred to Shorty that in the interest he had taken in the artillery duel he had not looked after Pete Skidmore for some time, and he began casting his eyes around for that youth. He was nowhere to be seen, and, of course, no one knew anything about him.

"Why don't you get a rope, Shorty, and tie the blamed kid to you, and not be pestering yourself and everybody else about him all the time?" asked the Orderly-Sergeant irritably, for he was deeply intent upon the prospective charge, and did not want to be bothered. "He's more worry than he's worth."

"Shut up!" roared Shorty. "If you wasn't Orderly-Sergeant I'd punch your head. I won't have nobody sayin' that about little Pete. He's the best boy that ever lived. If I could only git hold of him I'd shake the plaguey life out o' him. Drat him!"

Shorty anxiously scanned the field in every direction, but without his eyes being gladdened by the sight of the boy.

The wounded being carried back from the batteries impressed him sadly with the thought that Pete might have been struck by a piece of shell.

"Him and Sandy Baker are both gone," said the Orderly, looking over the company. "I'll buck-and-gag both of 'em when I catch 'em, to learn 'em to stay in ranks."

"Indeed you won't," said Shorty, under his breath.

The rebel fire had completely died down, and our own ceased, to allow the guns to cool for a few minutes, in preparation for an energetic reopening when the anticipated charge should be ordered.

To be in readiness for this, the Colonel drew the regiment forward through the batteries, to lie down on the slope in front, that he might have a start on the other Colonels. As they passed through the batteries a little imp, about the size of Pete Skidmore, but with face as black as charcoal, pulled off the leather bag in which cartridges are carried from the limber to the gun, and handed it to one of the cannoneers, who said:

"Well, good-by, if you must be going. You done well. You ought to belong to the artillery. You're too good for a dough-boy. I'm going to ask the Captain to have you detailed to us."

A similar scene was taking place at the next gun, with a little blackamoor about the size of Sandy Baker.

The boys picked up their guns and belts from the ground, and fell in with Co. Q.

"Hello, Corporal," said Pete, with a capacious grin rifling the powder grime on his face. "We've just bin having lots o' fun."

"Pete, you aggravatin' little brat," said Shorty, giving him a cuff that started the boy's tears to making little white streaks through the black, "where in the world have you bin, and what've you bin doin'?"

"Why," whimpered Pete, "me and Sandy crept forward to a rock where we thought we could see better, and then we thought we could see better from another, and we kept a-goin' until we got clear up to where the limbers was, afore we knowed it. Just then a couple o' them powder-monkeys, as you call 'em, come runnin' back for cartridges, but they was both hit, and was all bloody, and both of 'em fell down and couldn't go no further, when they got the cartridges, though they wanted to. Me and Sandy thought it was too bad that the men up there at the guns shouldn't have no cartridges, when they was fighting so hard, so we picked up the boys' bags and run up to the cannon with 'em. The men there was so glad to git 'em, and told us to lay down our guns and run back for some more. They kept us goin' till the rebels was knocked out, and we thought we was doin' right and helpin', and they told us we was, and now you slap me. Boo-hoo-hoo!"

"Don't cry, Pete. I done wrong," said Shorty, melting instantly, and putting his arm around the boy. "You done right, and you're a brave, good little boy. Only you must not go away from the company without lettin' me know."

"Good God," groaned the Colonel, as he halted the regiment down the slope, and studied the opposite side with his glass. "There's another abatis, and it

looks worse than the one in which we have just left half the regiment. But we'll go through if there's only one man left to carry the flag over the works. I don't suppose that we are any better than those who have already died, or got any better right to live."

"This is the dumbest country for cuttin' down trees the wrong way," Si sadly remarked, as he surveyed the abatis. "It's meaner'n midnight murder. I'd like to git hold o' the pizen whelp what invented it."

"The devil invented abatis, just after he invented hell, and as an improvement on it, and just before he invented secession," Shorty judged hotly. "When we git through them abatis there I'm goin' to kill everything I find, just to learn 'em to stop sich heathenish work. It's sneakin' murder, not war."

"When we get through," murmured Alf Russell dolefully. "How many of us will ever get through?"

"Who'll be the Jim Humphreys and Gid Mackall this time?" said Monty Scruggs, looking at the tangled mass of tree-tops.

"Can you see any path through this abatis, Sergeant?" nervously asked Harry Joslyn.

"No, Harry," said Si, kindly and encouragingly. "But we'll find some way to git through. There's probably a path that we kin strike. Stay close by me, and we'll try our best."

"Well, I for one am goin' through, and I'm goin' to take Pete and Sandy with me," said Shorty, in a loud, confident tone, to brace up the others. "I've always gone through every one o' them things I've

struck yit, and this ain't no worse'n the others. But we ought to jump 'em at once, while they're shiverin' over the shelling' we give 'em. They must be shakin' up there yit like a dog on a January mornin'. Why don't we start, I wonder?"

The batteries behind them began throwing shells slowly and deliberately, as if testing their range, before beginning a general cannonade. All along the crest, to their right and to their left, could be seen regiments moving up and going into line of battle.

"It's goin' to be a big smash this time, sure," said Si. "And the 200th Injianny's got a front seat at the performance. We'll show them how to do it, and we're just the ones that kin. Brace up, boys. The eyes of the whole army's on us. They expect big things from us."

"Here she goes, I guess," he continued, as a bugle sounded at headquarters. "Everybody git ready to jump at the word, and not stop goin' till we're inside the works."

The lines stiffened, every one drew a long breath, gripped his gun, and braced himself for the fiery ordeal. There was an anxious wait, and then the Adjutant came walking quietly down the line, with his horse's bridle over his arm.

"It seems," he explained to Capt. McGillicuddy, loud enough for the company to hear, "that we are not to make an assault, after all. There's enough rebels over there in the works to eat us up without salt. We are ordered to only make a demonstration, and hold them, while the rest work down on their flanks toward Calhoun, which is six miles below, and

get in their rear. You can let your men rest in place till further orders."

"Take the company Orderly," said the Captain, walking off with the Adjutant.

"Tention! Stack arms; Place rest!" commanded the Orderly.

The revulsion of feeling among the keenly-wrought-up men was almost painful.

"Demonstration be blamed," said Si, sinking upon a convenient rock. "I always did hate foolin'. Gracious, how tired I am."

"Only a demonstration—only powow, noise, show and bluff," sneered Shorty, flinging his gun against the stack. "Why didn't they tell us this an hour ago, and save me all this wear and tear that's makin' me old before my time? When I git ready for a fight I want it to come off, without any postponement on account of weather. Come, Pete, go wash your face and hands, and then we'll spread our blankets and lay down. I'm tireder'n a mule after crossin' Rocky Face Ridge. I don't want to take another step, nor even think, till I git a good sleep."

"We don't have to go over that brush, then?" said Alf Russell, with an expression of deep relief. "I'm so glad. Great Jerusalem, how my wound begins to ache again. You fellows oughtn't to laugh at my wound. You don't know how it hurts to have all those delicate nerves torn up."

So it was with every one. The moment the excitement of the impending fight passed away, every one was sinking with fatigue, and all his other troubles came back. Monty Scruggs suddenly remembered

how badly he had been hurt, and started to drag himself off in search of the Surgeon, while Harry Joslyn and Sandy Baker, chumming together for the first time, snuggled together in their blankets, and sought that relief from the excitement and fatigues of the day which kindly Nature never refuses to healthy young bodies.

CHAPTER XIX.

SI AND SHORTY ARE PUT UNDER ARREST.

THE next morning the rebels were found to be gone from the position in front of the 200th Ind., and after breakfast the regiment marched leisurely by a road around the dreaded abatis, to the ground which had been scarred and mangled by our terrible artillery fire.

It was an appalling scene that the eyes of the boys rested upon. Every horrid form of mutilation and death which could be inflicted by the jagged shards and fiendish shells, or the even more demon-like shrapnel-balls, was visible.

Everything was torn, rent, and ragged, as if some mighty giant, insane to destroy, had spent his fury there. Nothing had escaped the iron flail of devastation. Trees shattered or cut entirely down; limber-chests and cannon-wheels merely bunches of blackened splinters; frightfully mangled horses, dead, or yet living in agony that filled their great plaintive eyes; lying in ghastly pools of blood, which filmed and clotted under the bright rays of the May morning sun.

"Looks like Judgment morn or the fall of Babylon," muttered the religious-minded Alf Russell, the first to break their awed silence.

"Or the destruction of Sennacherib," suggested Monty Scruggs—

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the
blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed."



AWFUL DESTRUCTION.

"I should say he had a mighty strong breath, Monty," Shorty interrupted. He liked to break in on Monty's heroics. "Excuse me from havin' a 12-pounder breathin' around me."

“And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew
still,”

continued Monty.

“I’ll bet there wasn’t much sleepin’ around here
while that shellin’ was goin’ on,” broke in Shorty
again. “Except the sleep that has the sod for a
coverlet and Gabriel’s trumpet for a breakfast bell.”

Monty continued impressively:

“And there lay the steed, with his nostrils all wide,
But through them there rolled not the breath of his
pride;

And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.”

“Poor horses,” murmured Shorty. “I always feel
mighty sorry for them. They hadn’t nothin’ to do
with gittin’ up this rebellion. We must go around
and kill such as is alive, and put them out o’ their
misery.”

Monty resumed:

“And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances uplifted, the trumpets unblown.”

“Serves ’em right, the yaller-bellied, clay-eatin’
yowlers,” said Shorty savagely, looking over the
mangled corpses. “Pays ’em up for their murderin’
abatis. We got it in this time worse on them than
they did on us, though it’d take as much of this as’d
make up several Counties to pay up for any one o’

the good boys we lost yesterday. I hope they are all where they kin look down and see how we got it on the secesh hell-hounds. We'll do 'em up worse yit before we're through with 'em."

"Our batteries are improvin' wonderfully," commented the more practical Si, studying the field. "They seem to've socked every shell in just where it'd do the most good. No shootin' at the State o' Georgy generally and trustin' to luck to hit a rebel. Every shell seems to've landed just where it was needed, and then 'tended to its business and busted. You don't see no signs of any strikin' a quarter of a mile away, nor a whole one layin' around anywhere. That's good gunnin', and I'm glad our old six-hoss thrashin'-machine done the biggest share of it. Our brigade has the best battery in the whole army."

"The regiment will go on," reported Orderly-Sergeant, "but Co. Q will stay behind to bury the dead, gather up the arms and things, and then bring up the brigade ammunition train."

"Stay behind to bury the dead," grumbled Shorty. "Nice business that! Sextons to the Southern Confederacy. Hain't they got any niggers around here that they kin set at the work?"

Nor did Si like the job. "The artillery made the muss, and now the infantry's got to stay and clean up after it. That don't seem right."

"Well, orders is orders, and got to be obeyed," said the Orderly-Sergeant, cutting short the discussion with the usual formulary of his class. An Orderly-Sergeant is robbed of one of the cherished privileges of the other enlisted men. He can not criticise or

grumble, but must stop the others from doing so beyond a certain point, and his refuge must be the prompt assumption that the orders are all right, and must be executed cheerfully. And he has not the satisfaction of the officers above him in knowing the why and wherefore of the orders, and perhaps advising as to them. He is "betwixt and between," as they say out West.

"The quicker we get at it," continued the Orderly, "the sooner it'll be over. Serg't Klegg, take eight or 10 men and hunt around for some picks and shovels. I think that deep trench over there behind the works 'll do for a grave. You can shovel the bank right down on them and save hard work. Serg't Wilson, you take eight or 10 men and gather up these pieces o' men and lay them in there. Corp'l Jones, you take another man or two and go around and kill those horses. Be careful how you shoot now. Don't hurt anybody with glancing bullets. Corp'l Elliott, you take the rest and go round and gather the guns and other things, and pile them up there by that tree to turn over to the ordnance officer. Hustle, now, all of you."

"They didn't think they were digging their own graves," philosophized Monty Scruggs, as he stood shovel in hand watching the remains being gathered into the trench.

•
"He digged a ditch, he digged it deep;
He digged it for his brother,
But for his great sin he fell in
The ditch he'd digged for t'other."

"Good, good, Monty," said Si. "That's the best thing I've heard you spout yit. Give us some more of it."

"There isn't any more of it. The only thing I can think of is:

"The rebel Solomon Grundy;
Born in Georgia on Monday;
Become a rebel on Tuesday;
Run off from Buzzard's Roost on Wednesday;
Got licked at Dalton on Thursday;
Worse whipped at Resaca on Friday;
Blown up by a shell on Saturday;
Died and buried on Sunday;
And this was the end of Solomon Grundy."

Alf Russell's interest in anatomy had led him to join Serg't Wilson's party in gathering up the ghastly fragments of bodies, but the sights were too much for his nerves, and as he perceived that he was growing sick at the stomach he went over to Shorty's squad.

It was astonishing what things they found, besides guns and equipments. Evidently, the rebels had left quite hurriedly, and many personal belongings were either forgotten or could not be found in the darkness. Samples of about everything that soldiers carry, and a good many that they are not supposed to, were found lying around. There were cooking utensils, some on the fire, with corn-pone and meat in them; some where the imperative orders to march found their owners with their breakfasts half-devoured; there were hats clumsily fashioned of

wisps of long-leaved pine sewed together; there were caps which had been jaunty red-and-blue "Zouaves" when their owners had mustered around Nashville in 1861, but had been faded and tarnished and frayed by the mud and rain at Donelson, Shiloh and Stone River, and by the dust and grime of Perryville and Chickamauga, until they had as little semblance to their former perkiness as the grim-visaged war had to the picnic of capturing ungarrisoned forts and lolling in pleasant Summer camps on the banks of the Cumberland. There were coats of many patterns and stages of dilapidation, telling the same story of former finery, draggled through the injurious grime of a thousand camps and marches. There were patched and threadbare blankets, tramped-out boots and shoes, an occasional book, many decks of cards, and so on.

Shorty came across a new cedar canteen with bright brass hoops. He slung it over his shoulder, with the thought that it would be a nice thing to send back to Maria, as a souvenir of the battle. She might hang it up in her room, or make a pin-cushion or a work-basket out of it.

Presently he came to a box of shells, which he picked up and carried back to the tree. It was quite heavy, and when he set it down again he felt thirsty. The canteen occurred to him. It was full. He raised it to his lips and took a long swig.

"Great Jehosephat," he gasped, his eyes starting out with astonishment. "That ain't water. It's prime old applejack, smother'n butter, and smellin' sweeter'n a rose. Best I ever tasted."

Shorty had been strictly abstinent since his return

from Indiana. The rigid views of the Klegg family as to liquor-drinking had sunk into his heart, and somehow whenever temptation came his way the clear, far-seeing eyes of Maria would intervene with such a reproachful glance that the thought of yielding became repugnant.

But the smooth, creamy applejack had slipped past his lips so unexpectedly that it possessed him, before principle could raise an objection. Shorty was the kind of a man to whom the first drink is the greatest danger. After he had one almost anything was likely to happen.

Still, though his blood was already warming with the exhilarating thrill, there were some twinges of conscience.

"Now, I mustn't take no more o' that," he said to himself. "That one drink was good and all right enough, because I really thought I was goin' to take a drink of water when I put the canteen to my lips. I could swear that to Maria on a stack o' Bibles high as her dear head. God bless her!"

He began bustling about with more activity, and giving his orders in a louder voice. He saw Pete Skidmore pick up what had been once a militia officer's gaudy coat, and examine it curiously. He shouted at him:

"Here, drop that, drop that, you little brat. What 'd I tell you? That you mustn't tetch a rag of anything you see in here, except with the point o' your bayonet and with your bayonet on your gun. Drop it, I tell you."

"Why, what's the matter with that old coat?"

asked Pete in an injured tone, astonished at Shorty's vehemence.

"Everything's the matter with it, and every stitch o' cloth you find. They're swarmin' with rebel bugs. I've trouble enough to keep the Yankee graybacks off you. If you git the rebel kind on you angwintum won't save you."

Pete dropped the coat in affright.

"And you, Sandy Baker, continued Shorty in a yell, "don't you walk through them piles o' brush and leaves, where the rebels has bin sleepin'. You'll git covered with rebel bugs, too, and we'll never git 'em out o' the company. How often 've I got to tell you that?"

Yelling so much made him dry, and the canteen hung so invitingly near his hand.

"I don't think another pull at that old applejack 'll hurt me a mite. I really didn't git a square drink the first time, because I was choked off by astonishment at findin' it wasn't water. I'll just take enough of a swig to finish up that drink."

"Jerusalem crickets," he exclaimed, wiping his mouth, "but that's good stuff. Wonder if bein' in cedar makes it taste so bang-up? If I though so I'd never drink out o' anything but cedar as long's I lived. Guess I'll keep this canteen to carry water in. I kin send Maria"——

He stopped. He was not so far gone as to forget that any thought of Maria was very inappropriate to his present condition. He started to blustering at the boys who were carrying in guns:

"Here, how often have I got to caution you galoots about bein' careful with them guns? Don't let the

muzzles pint at yourselves, nor anybody else. They're all likely to be loaded, and go off any minute, and blow some o' your cussed heads offen you. Don't slam 'em down that way. Be careful with 'em, I tell you. I'll come over there and larrup some o' you, if you don't mind me."

"What's excitin' Shorty so, to make him yell that way? wondered Si, stopping in his shoveling down the embankment upon the rebel dead, and wiping his hot face.

"O, he's trying to keep them fresh young kids from blowin' themselves into Kingdom Come with the rebel guns," answered one of the veterans indifferently, and they resumed their shoveling.

Shorty started over to where some of the boys were trying to extricate a rebel limber abandoned in a ravine. He spied a pair of fine field glasses lying on the ground, and picked them up with an exclamation of delight.

"Great Jehosephat," he said, turning them over for careful inspection. "Ain't this a puddin'? Just the thing to give the Cap. He got his smashed with a bullet comin' through the abatis, and's bin mournin' about 'em ever since. These is better'n his was, and he'll be ticked to death to git 'em.

He put them to his eyes and scanned the landscape.

"Ain't they just daisies, though. Bring that teamster over there so close that I kin hear him cussin' his mules. Cap'll have a better pair o' glasses than the Colonel or the General has. He deserves 'em, too. Capt. McGillicuddy's good all the way through, from skin to bone, and as brave as

they make 'em. He'll be tickleder than a boy with a new pair o' red-topped boots. He'll invite me to take a drink with him, but he won't have nothin' so good as this old apple-jack. I guess I'll give the rest to him, too, for his friends at headquarters. They don't often smack their lips over stuff like that. But I'll treat myself once more, just as Capt. McGillicuddy'd do."

The last drink was a settler. He was then in a frame of mind for anything—to tear down a mountain, or lift a hill, or to fight anybody, with or without cause. He looked over at the boys struggling with the limber, and yelled, as he laid his coat, hat, canteen, and cartridge-box down on the stump upon which he had been sitting, and placed the field-glass upon them:

"Hoopee! Yank her out o' there, boys. Yank her out, and don't be all day about it, either. Let me git at her and I'll fetch her out. Stand by, you kids, and see your uncle Eph snatch her."

He bolted in to the ravine, swung the limber-tongue about, and with aid of the rest, stirred to united effort by much profane vociferation on his part, disengaged the limber and trundled it up the bank.

The tall, very stiff young Aid, with whom Si and Shorty had had the previous affair, came stalking on to the ground, viewing everything with his usual cold, superior, critical gaze.

"You are doing well, my man," he remarked to Shorty, "but too much noise. A non-commissioned officer must not swear at his men. It's strictly against regulations."

"Go to blazes," said Shorty, scarcely under his breath. The Aid picked up the field-glasses, looked at them a minute, scanned the field with them, and then looked around for the case, as if to appropriate them himself.

"Here, drop them," said Shorty roughly. "Them's mine."

"How did they come to be yours, sir?" said the Aid sternly. "Picked them up, didn't you?"

"None o' your business how I got 'em. They're mine, I tell you. Give 'em to me."

"You picked them up on the battlefield, sir. They are military equipments which you must turn over to the proper officer. I'll take charge of them myself."

"You'll do nothin' o' the kind," roared Shorty, striding up to him. "Give me them glasses."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said the Aid sternly. "Don't you dare approach me in that way. Go back to your duties at once. I shall punish you for disrespect to me and threatening an officer. Fall back, sir, I tell you."

Shorty made a grab for the glasses, which the Aid tried to evade, but Shorty fixed his firm clutch upon them. The Aid held on tightly, but Shorty wrenched them from his grasp.

"You bob-tailed brevet West Pointer," said Shorty savagely, raising his fist, "I've a notion to break you in two for tryin' to beat me out o' what's mine. Git out o' here, or I'll"——

"Shorty! Shorty! Stop that!" shouted Si, rushing over to his partner, and catching his back-drawn fist. He had been suspicious as to the cause of his part-

ner's noisiness, and ran up as soon as the disturbance began. "Stop it, I say. Are you crazy?"

Poor little Pete, badly excited as to what was happening to his best friend, was nervously fumbling his gun and eyeing the Aid.

"Si Klegg, go off and mind your own business, and let me attend to mine," yelled Shorty, struggling to free himself from his partner's iron grasp. "Am I goin' to be run over by every pin-feather snipe from West Point? I'll break him in two."

"Sergeant," commanded the Aid, reaching to take the field-glasses from Shorty's hand; "buck and gag that man at once. Knock him down if he resists. Knock him down, I say."

"You tend to your own business and I'll tend to mine. Go away from here, and don't say anything to make him madder, you wasp-waisted errand boy," said Si savagely, as he thrust himself in between the Aid and Shorty. "I've got enough to do to take care of him. Go off, if you don't want him to mash you."

Little Pete had an idea. He wriggled in between, snatched the glasses, and made off with them.

The Brigade Provost-Marshal rode up and sternly demanded what the disturbance was about. Shorty began a hot harrangue against young staff officers generally, and this particular offender, but Si got his arm across his mouth and muffled his speech. The Provost listened to the Aid's bitter indictment against both Si and Shorty.

"Put both those men under arrest," he said to the Orderly-Sergeant, "and make a list of the witnesses. I'll court-martial them at the first halting place."

CHAPTER XX.

SHORTY IS ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE COURT-MARTIAL.

TO REST, refit after the sharp fighting and marching, and to wait for the slightly wounded and other convalescents to come up, the brigade went into camp on the banks of the Oostenaula River, near Calhoun, Ga., and about 20 miles south of Dalton, which had been the objective at the opening of the campaign.

And while the men were washing and mending their clothes, it was decided to put the discipline of the brigade, which had suffered similarly by the rough campaign, through a somewhat like process of furnishing and renovation.

A court-martial was ordered, "to try such cases as may be brought before it."

The court convened with all the form and ceremony prescribed by the Army Regulations for tribunals which pass judgment upon the pay, honor and lives of officers and men.

The officers detailed for the court sent back to the baggage wagons, and got their wrinkled dress-suits out of the valises, they buttoned these to their throats, donned their swords, sashes and white gloves, and gathered stiffly and solemnly about a long, rough table, which had been put up under the

spreading limbs of giant oaks. Guards pacing at a little distance kept all the curious and inquisitive out of earshot. The camp gossips, full of interest as to the fate of those who were to be tried, could see an aggravating pantomime acted out, but hear no word.

A squad of offenders of various degrees of turpitude ranging from absence without leave to sleeping on post, were huddled together under the Provost Guard, while Si and Shorty, being non-commissioned officers, were allowed to remain with their company, to be produced by Capt. McGillicuddy when wanted. They kept themselves rigidly apart from the rest of the company, repelling the freely-offered sympathy of their comrades. Si was most deeply concerned about Shorty, who was so desperate over his fall from grace, that he regretted that he had not killed the young Aid, while he was at him, so as to have relieved his comrades of him, and made his own condemnation and execution sure.

"Old Maj. Truax, of the 1st Oshkosh, is President of the court," said the Orderly-Sergeant, as the company was anxiously canvassing the boys' chances.

"Gosh, that settles it," groaned Jerry Wilkinson; "that old bull o' the woods 'd rather shoot a man than not. He's always lookin' around for some excuse for sculping a man, and the less he has the savager he is."

"I don't believe it," said the Orderly. "I've watched old Truax, when he's been roaring around, and I always found that he was after somebody that deserved it. Men of that kind are pretty certain to be very soft on good soldiers, like Si and Shorty, and

I think he's all right. The boys of the 1st Oshkosh all swear by him, and you can trust a man's own regiment to know him surer than anybody else. And then there's Capts. Suter and Harris, of the Maumee Muskrats."

"Terrible strict," muttered Jerry despairingly.

"Lieuts. Newton and Bonesteel, of the Kankakees," continued the Orderly.

"Good men—promoted from the ranks, and remember that they once carried a gun themselves."

"Lieut. McJimsey, of the staff."

"A wasp-waisted West Pointer, raw from school; thinks he's learned all there's to know about war out of a book on triggnometry. Has no more feelin' for a private soljer than I have for a mule. Calls 'em 'my men,' roared Jerry.

"And as he's only a Second Lieutenant he'll have the first vote," sighed the Orderly. "And Lieut. Bowersox is to be the Judge-Advocate. He'll have to do the prosecuting. I know he hates the job. He thinks the world and all of Si and Shorty, but he's the kind of a man to do his duty without fear, favor or affection. And all of us 'll have to testify. Dumb Shorty's fool soul! Why didn't he get up his ruction somewhere where the boys couldn't see him, and know nothing about it! I've no patience with him or Si."

Lieut. Steigermeyer, the complainant, stalked by in solemn dignity.

"Can't I shoot that dod-blasted Aid, and save Shorty, and take it all on myself?" blubbered little Pete, who had been in tears ever since he had seen the grave assemblage of officers in full dress.

"Shut up, you little fool," said the Orderly savagely. In the selfishness of his sorrow it made him angry to see anybody else show more grief than his.



SHORTY REPORTS FOR TRIAL.

The Orderly, in stating Lieut. Bowersox's position, forgot, or was not aware of the fact, that while the Judge-Advocate represents the Government at a trial

as the Prosecuting Attorney, he is also the counsel for the defense; a dual role which has important and frequently unexpected results.

After the members were duly seated according to rank, with Maj. Truax at the head of the table, Lieut. Bowersox read the order for holding the court, and called the names of the members. He then said:

"Gentlemen, the first case I shall present to your notice is one of exceeding gravity, affecting a member of my own regiment. As it is the most important case that you shall have to consider, I thought it best that it should be disposed of first. Sergeant, bring in Corp'l William L. Elliott, Co. Q, 200th Ind. Volunteer Infantry."

Shorty entered the court with an air of extreme depression in face and manner, instead of the usual confident self-assertion which seemed to flow from every look and motion. He stood with eyes fixed upon the ground.

"Prisoner," said Lieut. Bowersox, "this court has met to try you. Look around upon the members, and see if there is any one to whom you have objection. If so, state it."

Shorty glanced listlessly from the head of the table toward the foot. There his eye rested on the Second Lieutenant for a minute, and then he muttered to himself, "No, he's no worse than the rest ought to be on me," and shook his head in answer to the Judge-Advocate's formal question.

"You will each of you rise, hold up your right hand and be sworn," said the Judge-Advocate, and they each pronounced after him the prolix and ponderous oath prescribed by the regulations:

“You, Maj. Benjamin Truax, do swear that you will well and truly try and determine, according to evidence, the matter now before you, between the United States of America and the prisoner to be tried, and, that you will duly administer justice, according to the provisions of an act establishing rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States, without partiality, favor or affection; and if any doubt shall arise, not explained by said articles, according to your understanding and the custom of war in such cases. And you do further swear, that you will not divulge the sentence of the court, until it shall be published by proper authority; neither will you disclose or discover the vote or opinion of any particular member of the court-martial, unless required to give evidence thereof, as a witness, by a court of justice in due course of law. So help you God.”

The President then took the book and administered the same oath to the Judge-Advocate.

“I shall now read the charges and specifications,” said the Judge-Advocate, “which are as follows, and he read with sonorous impressiveness:

CHARGE 1.—Insulting, Threatening, and Striking Superior Officer.

Specification I.—That Corp’l William L. Elliott, Co. Q, 200th Ind. Vol. Inf., did strike and perform other physical violence upon Second Lieut. Adolph Steigermeyer, of the Second Corps, U. S. Engr’s, who was his superior officer, and in the performance of his duty, in violation of the 9th Article of War, and contrary to the discipline of the Armies of the United States. This on the march of the army from Dalton,

Ga., to Calhoun, Ga., and on the 16th day of May, 1864.

Specification II.—That said Corp'l William L. Elliott, Co. Q, 200th Ind. Vol. Inf., did threaten physical violence to the said Second Lieut. Adolph Steigermeyer, Second Corps, U. S. Engr's, his superior officer, and who was in the performance of his duty, contrary to the 9th Article of War, and the discipline of the Armies of the United States. This on the march of the army from Dalton, Ga., to Calhoun, Ga., and on the 16th day of May, 1864.

Specification III.—That said Corp'l William L. Elliott, Co. Q, 200th Ind. Vol. Inf., did insult with many opprobrious words, the said Adolph Steigermeyer, Second Corps, U. S. Engr's, his superior officer, in the presence of many enlisted men, in violation of the 6th Article of War and of the discipline of the Armies of the United States. This on the march of the army from Dalton, Ga., to Calhoun, Ga., and on the 16th day of May, 1864.

CHARGE 2.—Drunkenness on duty.

Specification I.—That said Corp'l William L. Elliott, Co. Q, 200th Ind. Vol. Inf., being then on duty, and in command of a squad of men, was openly and noisely intoxicated and drunk, and incapable of performing said duty, in violation of the 45th Article of war, and the discipline of the Armies of the United States. This on the march of the army from Dalton, Ga., to Calhoun, Ga., and on the 16th day of May, 1864.

CHARGE 3.—Misappropriating Public Property.

Specification I.—That said Corp'l William L. Elliott, being charged with the duty of gathering up and

accounting for the property captured from and abandoned by the enemy, did appropriate to himself, attempt to conceal, and refuse to deliver to his superior officer a portion thereof, to wit, one pair of field glasses, in violation of the 58th Article of War, and contrary to the discipline of the Armies of the United States. This on the march of the enemy from Dalton, Ga., to Calhoun, Ga., and on the 16th day of May, 1864.

"O, goodness gracious!" murmured little Pete Skidmore, almost fainting with terror, in the covert of oak leaves, just above the court's head, whither he had noiselessly climbed, to overhear everything. "He's a-goner, sure! They'll shoot him, sure as guns. Saltpeter won't save him. He's broke every Article o' War in the whole book. My, what will I do?"

He slipped down and communicated his information to the anxiously-expectant comrades of Co. Q.

"It mayn't be as bad as we expect," the Orderly-Sergeant tried to console them. "The bite of most of them regulations and charges and specifications ain't never near as bad as their bark. If they were, a good many of us would have been shot long ago. My experience in the army's been that the regulations are like the switches the teachers used to have in school—a willow for the good scholars, and a stout hickory for the bad ones. Still, I'm afraid that Shorty won't get off with less than hard labor for life on the fortifications."

"Prisoner, you have heard the charges and specifications," said Lieut. Bowersox, in a stern voice. "How do you plead to them?"

"O, I'm guilty—guilty o' the whole lot," said Shorty dejectedly.

"Inasmuch," said Lieut. Bowersox, with an entire change of tone, "as it is my duty to represent the prisoner's interests as counsel, I shall disregard his plea, and enter one of not guilty."

Shorty started to gasp. "But I done all that"——

"Silence," thundered Lieut. Bowersox, "you are only to speak, sir, when I or some other member of the court ask you a question."

"But has the Judge-Advocate the right to disregard the plain plea?" Lieut. McJimsey started to inquire, when the President interrupted with——

"Lieutenant, we can have no discussion of the court's practices in the presence of the prisoner. If you want to enter upon that we shall have to clear the court. Do you desire that?"

There was something in the bluff old Major's tone that made the Lieutenant think this inadvisable, and he signified the negative.

"Call your first witness, then, Judge-Advocate," said Maj. Truax, with a wave of his hand.

Lieut. Steigermeyer, in full-dress, even to epaulets, rigidly erect and sternly important as to look, testified that he was a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army, but had the staff rank of Captain and Inspector-General, and after going out of his way to allude to the laxness of discipline he found prevailing in the Western armies, testified that on the day mentioned, while in pursuance of his duty, he was going over the battlefield, he came upon the prisoner, whose drunken yelling attracted his attention; that he had admonished him, and received insults in reply——

"My way is to knock a man down, when he gives me any back talk," remarked the Major, sotto voce, taking a fresh chew of tobacco. "That's better than court-martialing to promote discipline."

"Further admonitions," continued the Lieutenant, "had the same result, and I was about to call a guard to put him under arrest, when I happened to notice a pair of field-glasses that the prisoner had picked up, and was evidently intending to appropriate to his own use, and not account for them. This was confirmed by his approaching me in a menacing manner, insolently demanding their return, and threatening me in a loud voice if I did not give them up, which I properly refused to do, and ordered a Sergeant who had come up to seize and buck-and-gag him. The Sergeant, against whom I shall appear later, did not obey my orders, but seemed to abet his companion's gross insubordination. The scene finally culminated, in the presence of a number of enlisted men, in the prisoner's wrenching the field-glasses away from me by main force, and would have struck me had not the Sergeant prevented this. It was such an act as in any other army in the world would have subjected the offender to instant execution. It was only possible in"——

"Pardon me, Lieutenant—I should perhaps say Captain"—interrupted Lieut. Bowersox, with much sweetness of manner, "but the most of us are familiar with your views as to the inferiority of the discipline of the Western Armies to that of the Army of the Potomac and European armies, so that we need not take up the time of the court with its reiteration. What farther happened?"

"Nothing. The Provost Guard came up at that moment, and I directed a Sergeant to place the two principal offenders in custody, and secure the names of the witnesses."

"Is that all, Captain?"

"Yes, except that in closing my testimony I feel that it is my duty to impress upon the court that so flagrant a case as this should be made the opportunity for an example in the interests of discipline in the whole army. I have known this prisoner for some time, and watched him. This is not the first time that he and the Sergeant have insulted me. They are leaders in that class of uneducated fellows who have entirely too little respect for officers and gentlemen. They should be taught a lesson. This is necessary for the dignity and effectiveness of gentlemen who bear commissions, and"——

"I will ask the witness if this lecture on military ethics is a part of his testimony?" asked the Major.

"I think it is needed," answered the Lieutenant tartly.

"Let me see, Steigermeyer," said the Major, adjusting another chew of tobacco to his mouth, and balancing the knife with which he had cut it off, judicially in his fingers, a favorite position of his when, as a lawyer, he was putting a witness through a cross-examination. "How long have you been with this army? Came West with the Eleventh Corps, didn't you?"

"No; I was left behind on duty. I didn't come for several weeks after."

"So I thought. You weren't with us at Stone River, or Chickamauga, or Mission Ridge. You'd

know more if you had been. Your mental horizon would have been enlarged, so to speak. Aren't you from Milwaukee?"

"I was born and brought up there, until I went to West Point," answered the Lieutenant, rather uneasily.

"So I thought. The only man of your name that I ever heard of kept a saloon in Milwaukee—a great place for politicians to hang around. I used to go there myself when I was in politics. He was a sort of a ward boss. Was he your father?"

"Yes, sir," said the Lieutenant, with reddening face; "but I don't know what this has to do with the case that I have presented to your attention."

"It has a great deal to do with this lecture with which you have favored us," answered the Major dryly. "But we'll not discuss that in open court. Are you through with the witness, Judge-Advocate? If so, call the next."

"I'll just ask the Captain a few questions for the defense," said Lieut. Bowersox. "How did you know that the prisoner was drunk?"

"How did I know it? How does any man know that another is drunk? He was boisterous, excited and yelling—that kind of a drunk."

"But that does not prove that he was drunk. That may be his way of doing his work. Did you see him drink?"

"No."

"Did you ever see him before?"

"Yes."

"How was he acting then?"

"I shall have to say that he was boisterous and yelling then, but not so wildly excited."

"Then it was only a difference in degree, not kind. Was he not accomplishing what he was ordered to do?"

"Yes, he certainly did bring that limber out of the gulch."

"Then it is only a matter of opinion that he was drunk. You have nothing to guide you except your judgment that the man was drunk, who was still doing his duty pretty effectively."

"But there could be no mistake. I know that the man was raging drunk."

"As I said before, that is a matter of opinion and judgment which I will discuss with the court later. Did the prisoner actually strike you?"

"I cannot say that he actually did, farther than snatch out of my hand the field-glasses."

"He didn't do it! You're lyin'! I yanked the glasses out of your hand. 'Twas me," shouted little Pete, from the oak leaves.

The members all looked up in astonishment.

"Sergeant," said the Major to the Sergeant of the Provost Guard, "fetch that little rascal down and buck-an-gag him, until I can decide what further punishment he deserves for eavesdropping, and interrupting the court."

"I don't care if you kill me," whimpered little Pete, as they tied his hands together, "if you'll only let Corp'l Elliott off. He wasn't to blame. It was me.

"You can go," said Lieut. Bowersox to the Lieu-

tenant. "Sergeant, bring in Orderly-Sergeant Jacob Whitelaw."

In response to the Judge-Advocate's direct questionings the Orderly-Sergeant had to sorrowfully admit that he thought that Shorty was drunk, very drunk, and exceedingly noisy. But when Lieut. Bowersox changed to the defense, the Orderly-Sergeant testified with great alacrity that he had not seen Shorty take a drink, that he did not know where he could have got whisky; did not know where in all that part of Georgia there was a drop of liquor outside of the Surgeon's stores and the officers' canteens; that he wished he did know, for he'd like to have a drink himself; and that Shorty, when he was putting forth his greatest strength, was generally very vociferous and not at all careful of what he said. This was one of the peculiarities of the man, that he was overlooked on account of his great effectiveness on the men when in that state.

The other members of the company testified in the same way, giving their belief even more emphatically against any liquor being found anywhere in that neighborhood, and the unlikelihood of Shorty's being able to obtain any. The other members of the court had "caught on" very quickly to the tactics of the President and Judge-Advocate. All except Lieut. McJimsey, whose prepossessions were decidedly and manifestly in favor of the attitude of his brother staff officer. He grew stiffer and more dogged as the case proceeded, and frequently asked embarrassing questions. The Judge-Advocate announced that the case was closed, and the court would be cleared for deliberation.

"Before you open, Judge-Advocate," said Maj. Truax significantly, "I want to say something, not as a member of this court, but something between gentlemen, and I want to say it before we begin our deliberations, in order that it shall not be considered as part of them, or influencing them. The lecture by that self-sufficient fellow on our duties makes me tired. I remember his father—he sold the meanest whisky to be found in Milwaukee. I want to say right here that no man who sells lager beer can sell whisky fit for gentlemen to drink. Beer corrupts his taste, mind and judgment. Old Steigermeyer had a good deal of political influence of a certain kind, and he bulldozed the Representative from his District into giving his son an appointment to West Point. Now this young upstart comes around and absolutely lectures us who have always been gentlemen, and our fathers before us, on gentlemanliness. It was hard for me to keep from saying something right before him about the quality of whisky his father used to sell. I can stand a good deal, but the idea of a ginmill keeper's son lording it over others and over enlisted men who came of much better stock than he does sticks in my craw. Now, whenever I find one of these whose father got his appointment as Steigermeyer's father did (and the old Major's eye wandered down to where Lieut. McJimsey's air of sternness had given way to visible unrest) I'm tempted to say unpleasant things. Now, Judge-Advocate, proceed."

"The evidence in this case," said Lieut. Bowersox, with the severity proper to a vindicator of justice, "shows that it was a very flagrant breach of the

essentials of discipline, and deserves stern treatment. A man wearing the chevrons of a Corporal, has, in the presence of a number of enlisted men, behaved in the most unseemly manner, showed gross disobedience to his superior officer, reviled him with opprobrious epithets, threatened to strike him, and actually did strike him. On the other hand (and the Lieutenant's tone changed to that of counsel for the defense), we all of us know that the prisoner is an excellent soldier of long service, that his influence has always been for the best, and that he was promoted to Corporal as an exceptional compliment for his part in capturing a rebel flag at Chickamauga, where he was wounded and left for dead on the field. It is for you, gentlemen, to take all these facts into consideration, and determine how men of this stamp should be dealt with for the best interests of the service. The evidence against him is in many respects conflicting, and rests upon mere judgment, in which the best of us are liable to err. I will not detain you farther, gentlemen."

"You say this prisoner was promoted for capturing a rebel flag at Chickamauga?" asked Maj. Truax, who was perfectly aware of the fact, but wanted to emphasize it upon the others.

"Yes," said Lieut. Bowersox, only too glad of the opportunity. "I saw it all. Gallant a thing as was ever done. Simply magnificent. Thrills me to think about it. I tell you that fellow's a soldier all the way through.

"That was before this Stiegermeyer fellow and a lot of other fellows (and again his eyes wandered carelessly down toward Lieut. McJimsey) had even

joined us. I remember him also bringing up ammunition to his regiment at Stone River. He is one of those fellows that you can send to the rear, and always be sure that he'll come back as fast as his feet can carry him. I don't want to influence any member of this court, but the evidence that we have heard don't go an inch toward convincing me that he was drunk, or struck at his superior officer. There was some mistake, always liable to excited men. Lieut. McJimsey, you are the junior officer present. It is your right to speak and vote first. Let us hear from you."

The Lieutenant seemed to have recovered his sternness, and his expression showed a determination to wreak exemplary punishment on the man who had so grievously offended one of his class.

"It is clear to me," he began in a hard, set tone, "that an example should be made. These low, brutal fellows"——

"When I lived in Chicago," broke in the Major, in a conversational tone, apparently forgetful that he had called upon the Lieutenant to speak, but fixing a very piercing blue eye upon him, "I used to mix up a good deal with the boys who hung around a saloon kept by a ward politician, an unscrupulous, noisy, driving fellow named—But excuse me, Lieutenant, I forgot for the moment that I had called upon you to speak."

The Lieutenant's face had undergone a remarkable change, and as he sank back in his seat, he said in a forced voice:

"In consideration solely of the previous excellent character of the prisoner, I vote not guilty on all the

charges and specifications, but with a distinct warning to the man as to the future."

"So do I!" So do I!" said the rest, one after another, so quickly that it was almost a chorus.

"Judge-Advocate," said Maj. Truax, "when the General approves this finding, and you communicate it to prisoner, whisper in his ear that if he ever strains us this way again I'll take it upon myself to break his fool neck. Let him look a little out."

"The next case I have is that of Serg't Josiah Klegg, implicated in the same affair," said Lieut. Bowersox.

"Since we have acquitted the principal, it would be foolish to try the accessory," said Maj. Truax. "Say the same thing to him. Now, let's get down to business. Bring in that man that skulked when the boys were going for that abatis. I want to make an example of him, for the good of the service."

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